The New REPUBLIC

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Britain's Strangest Election

by H. N. BRAILSFORD

Mourning Becomes Electra

reviewed by STARK YOUNG

Open Letter to Walter Lippmann

by EDMUND WILSON

Stabilization by Contraction

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The New REPUBLIC

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The Week

DOLLAR wheat appears differently according to the direction from which we approach it. In 1924, the approach to dollar wheat—from above—scared many conservatives into believing that the Western farmers would go radical and vote for La Follette. Now the faint possibility of reaching that price—from below—is held forth as a cause of rejoicing in the streets, especially when coupled with the approach to dollar oil, as in Oklahoma. A rise of eighteen cents in three weeks is indeed a relief when wheat has been hovering under fifty cents a bushel at Chicago, and has brought only twenty-five at the grain elevators in western Kansas and Oklahoma. A bushel of wheat has actually been selling in the wheat-growing regions for not much more than half of the duty which we impose on the importation of a bushel. This is far enough below the average cost of production so that it cannot last forever. It was bound, before long, to stimulate the movement of grain, especially when existing stores in channels of consumption have been depleted and quality has deteriorated in some places. Apparently Russia is not going to export so much wheat as last year, and the supply from the Southern hemisphere will be somewhat reduced. Cautious forecasters put the probable average price this winter at about seventy-five cents. This is better than fifty, but it is a long way from a return to prosperity for the wheat farmer.

ATTACKED by the "big-navy boys" for his proposal to cut naval appropriations by $61,000,000, President Hoover has turned furiously upon his tormentors. He has accused members of the Navy League of carrying on "a campaign of misinformation to defeat the effort . . . for reduction of federal expenditures not immediately essential." He has menaced them with a committee of inquiry, and has demanded a public apology from William H. Gardiner, head of the Navy League. In this sudden and bitter controversy Mr. Hoover stands, for the moment, in a particularly sympathetic light. The heavy attacks on him from jingo quarters, on the grounds that he has sought to "restrict, reduce and starve" the navy, that he is making this country a third-rate naval power and sacrificing national defense "in the interests of his administration's foreign policy," in order to make more attractive proposals for world disarmament—these only do him honor. His willingness to join in the one-year naval construction holiday beginning November 1, 1931, under the auspices of the League of Nations, and his effort to reduce the American naval budget must certainly be counted among the more courageous and commendable actions of his unhappy regime. What we approve about this action, however, is not that it cuts governmental expenditure at this time, when governmental expenditure ought to be expanded, but that it saves money for better uses. Every dollar cut from our program of destruction ought to be put into the building of valuable and lasting wealth, into the expansion of expenditure which would help revive industry, raise prices and absorb unemployment.

THE Filipinos were told plainly by President Hoover, last week, that they must continue to wait for their independence. After a conference with Secretary of War Hurley, recently returned from the

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Philippines, the President announced that economic security must be attained before any thought could be given to political independence; "collapse of all economic life in the islands" would follow if an immediate separation were effected. There is truth in this statement, since three-fourths of the Philippines' trade is with the United States; and suddenly to be flung outside of our tariff wall would be disastrous for them. Certain American interests—beet-sugar, tobacco and cotton-oil—would like to see the islands' competing products barred, and are actively supporting agitation for independence. The present seems a bad moment to turn the Philippines loose upon a troubled world; and their own leaders are reported to be greatly perplexed. But it is none the less imperative that the administration should formulate a definite program, setting a term of years for granting the long promised political independence, and effecting the transition without lodging a vital blow to trade. In annexing the Philippines this country imposed its own system of economy upon them, and therefore has responsibilities to discharge. Secretary Hurley is said to have returned with a plan for a new policy, of which only vague advance reports have been given out. His plan should be made public; the sooner, the better.

IN Canada, public opinion has been excited for months over the Beauharnois power scandals. Corruption of statesmen and public officials upon a financial scale never before seen in Canada has been exposed, thanks to the attacks of the Western farm bloc in Parliament. All the unhealthy and immoral symptoms which appear whenever private enterprise seeks the monopoly of great public resources have declared themselves in this case: watered stock, to the extent of $7,000,000, direct bribes of hundreds of thousands to politicians and officials, rich public contracts acquired for a bagatelle. However, the partisan investigation lately conducted has come to a sudden stop, owing to the fear that further exposures would blacken the Conservative as well as the Liberal party. The Beauharnois affair is aptly described as "Canada's Teapot Dome," by Judson D. King, director of the National Popular Government League in Washington and author of an excellent pamphlet which reviews the whole case. The issue before the Canadian as well as the American people, as Mr. King concludes, is whether private capital, with its familiar methods, or government is to develop the great power resources that remain. Mr. King proposes that the time is ripe to investigate thoroughly the political organization of the American power trust, which is operating here in much the same fashion as in Canada.

BUNK, according to tradition, is supposed to be a typical product of the American genius; and the promoters, high-pressure advertisers and boosters' associations who often purvey the article are also considered typically American. On the other hand, one may point to Consumers' Research, Inc., as a unique native institution which, called forth to "debunk" business, has been flourishing nobly. During the year ending October 1, 1931, the number of subscribers to this confidential service has multiplied almost five times to a total of 24,792. A larger staff has become necessary, and extension of investigations and tests into new fields is planned for the coming year: the conflicting claims of various brands of shoes and stockings, for instance, are to be added to the other commodities regularly scrutinized from the consumer's point of view. By meeting a veritable public need, without recourse to sensational methods, Consumers' Research has prospered—how many other newly formed enterprises can point to such prosperity nowadays?

THE billboards which have become a part of the landscape, competing with blue mountains, silvery lakes and California redwood trees, have been stoutly defended before a convention of the Advertising Federation of America, recently held in Providence. Interested parties asserted that outdoor publicity meets the need for "exclamatory advertising," that it is peculiarly valuable in combating the business depression. In a similar vein, Dean Carl W. Ackerman of the Columbia School of Journalism, speaking at a luncheon of the Advertising Club of New York, urged that a $25,000,000 coöperative advertising "pool" be formed to drum up buying power and thaw out "frozen confidence." The press agents of business might stop to reflect before accepting such proposals, now made in all seriousness. The advertising fraternity claimed credit freely for prosperity, as long as it lasted, alleging that it was the result of high-powered selling campaigns. Is it not going to share in the blame for adversity? In the early stages of the business recession, a spectacular effort was made to counteract the effects of the market crash through optimistic slogans and exhortations, through all kinds of mummery. Did this magic work? None can deny the immense power of propaganda in a mass civilization. But can it work against fundamental facts; can words, even a hundred feet tall, supplant actions perpetually? Can all the wild horses of advertising drag a man into an automobile salesroom to buy a new car, if he hasn't the wherewithal to make his first down-payment?

RETURNS from the presidential election in Peru, officially reported last week, give Colonel Sanchez Cerro, the man who led the revolt against Dictator Leguía, a majority of more than 30,000 votes. Haya de la Torre, his nearest competitor, who made violent attacks upon foreign encroachment, Indian enslavement and private property, received much less popular support than was at first expected. His defeat leaves Colonel Cerro, a soldier without a program other than a vague promise to serve those who engineered the Arequipa revolt, in

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almost complete control of Peru. . . . Conservative elements have also triumphed in Chile, with the recent election of Señor Montero. Unlike Colonel Cerro, however, Señor Montero has a definite program of government. Although supported by the reactionaries, Señor Montero is a man who has gained considerable prestige as a university professor and a liberal of long standing. His opposition to the dictatorship of General Ibáñez and to some of the tactics employed by foreign capital in Chile rallied to his side the majority of the people. Under him foreign capital has not much to fear, provided it will close the chapter of the exploitation of Chile for the benefit of London and New York capitalists. The big Cosach Company (Chilean Nitrate Company) dominated by the Guggenheim interests, will continue to do business, and it is likely that some sort of interest payment on the foreign debt will be resumed as soon as conditions permit.

A FEW days before the "historic" visit of Ministers Laval and Briand to Berlin last month, an amazing proposal for a thoroughgoing Franco-German *Anschluss,* as The New Republic has learned, was made by Professor Mendelssohn Bartholdy, a leading political figure and former member of the German Cabinet. Although Herr Bartholdy's views, which throw a strong, harsh light on the European crisis, were published in the Parisian journal Excelsior, organ of Poincaré, no account of them whatever was given by the American press. Germany could scarcely survive another six months, Herr Bartholdy claimed. The rapprochement between France and Germany should have been achieved long ago; now it is virtually "too late to tread this path." A radically new union of France, Germany, Belgium and Austria was the substance of Bartholdy's plan. He proposed that a bilingual government, similar to the Swiss federation, be set up to deal with questions of foreign policy, national defense and customs, leaving internal affairs to the individual states. If this solution were rejected as fantastic, Herr Bartholdy bluntly named the alternate one of "economic *Anschluss* of Germany and Russia" to carry out a five or ten-year plan in common, whatever the consequences for the rest of the world. To forestall such a desperate alliance, which the Germans themselves do not desire, he concluded that France must effect at once, and at the very least, a peaceful union with Germany—a union involving equal rights for both countries and without secret political understandings. The Laval-Bruening conversations seemed to arrive at nothing more tangible than a gesture; both ministries publicly denied that anything like the condemned Austro-German customs union was contemplated. Nevertheless, rumors have persisted that such a customs union was the chief subject of discussion. All this sounds too good to be true. At any rate the enlightened press in France called the Berlin conference a "beginning" which contained the germ of an ultimate European unity.

WHAT part should the federal government play in education? What should the federal relations be to education? These and other pertinent questions were to be answered by President Hoover's National Advisory Committee on Education, formed and headed by Secretary of the Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur early in 1929. The long delayed report of this body—which showed how safe, sane and colorless a group of distinguished Americans can become when serving upon one of Mr. Hoover's commissions—has been sharply attacked by an authority in the field, Professor J. McKeen Cattell, writing in School and Society. All that the Committee recommended, as Professor Cattell points out, was that the Bureau of Education (within Secretary Wilbur's department) be relieved of all administrative work and reduced solely to research and fact finding, the Bureau remaining henceforth merely an "Office of Education." The only other real proposal was that there should be a federal grant of $2.50 annually to the states for each child, to be used for "educational operations." The question of a national Department of Education, to be headed by a member of the Cabinet, and of its sphere of operations, was completely dodged by the Committee. Such a department, as Professor Cattell pictures it, need not disturb the regional and nonpolitical character of our school system. It could create a national university at Washington coördinating and directing scientific and cultural activities and, especially, unifying federal welfare work in agriculture, commerce and labor. It could direct educational broadcasting by radio, which certainly offers interstate problems enough to compel a greater degree of federal control than now exists. But the Committee, apparently determined by Secretary Wilbur's views, was anxious only to diminish administrative "burdens" and contented to have our system of education directed, as it now actually is, by foundations, philanthropic trusts and successful capitalists, rather than by some responsible arm of the government.

THE poets grow childlike, writes Max Eastman in Harper's Magazine for October; and though he wears an air of amused tolerance toward writers like James Joyce or Hart Crane, he continues the more or less profitable game of giving away the hoax of "modernist" literature to the great public which, supposedly, longs only for the assurance that it has been hoaxed. This time Mr. Eastman applies the psychological theories of Jean Piaget—concerning the disposition, in infants and hysterical types, to unintelligible monologue—to the new literary cultivators of "the obscure." The rapturous utterances of the modern poets, Mr. Eastman quickly deduces, are simply survivals of childish dispositions, thereby bounding a few steps ahead of Professor Piaget himself. But what contribution

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to criticism is there in calling the poets infantile or hysterical? One becomes more and more suspicious of all the glib statements now being made by amateurs bent on applying psychology and psychoanalysis to every possible phase of human activity. Neither James Joyce nor the American poet Hart Crane strikes one as childlike in his writings. Both regard poetic language as music primarily; and both employ symbols of things rather than directly communicative expressions, by a process of refinement that is characteristic of the extremely civilized adult. This tendency, under various guises, has appeared in ancient as well as recent literature. The chief danger incurred by this type of art is that it requires the utmost self-sacrifice on the part of the reader, who is expected "to devote his whole life to my work," as James Joyce is reported to have said to Mr. Eastman. Alas, readers will not martyrize themselves beyond a few consecutive evenings; and James Joyce knows this as well as anybody. He was undoubtedly indulging himself, as Mr. Eastman should have realized, in humorous exaggeration by way of protest against the kind of literature which "he who runs may read."

IN AN editorial paragraph in the issue of October 28, it was stated that, in the campaign for unemployment relief, $170,090,130 is required for thirty-four cities. This statement should have read 314 cities.

Stabilization by Contraction

ON EVERY hand, industrial and legal spokesmen are agitating for modification of the anti-trust laws in the interest of stabilization. In Gerard Swope's plan, for instance, trade associations are not only to be made industry-wide by compulsion, but are to be given the legal right to stabilize prices—which implies the right to agree to restrict production. The plan of the United States Chamber of Commerce is a variant of this idea. In Senator La Follette's committee hearings on his bill for a National Economic Council, the plea is made by business men that industry should be given greater freedom to stabilize. All these expressions make a nod in the direction of public interest by saying that some sort of supervision by government would be required, but none wants the government to have much power; they all imply that industry could do the essential job if it were given a chance.

The obvious comment on these proposals is that in numerous important industries the anti-trust laws at present do not prevent the exercise of the power demanded. Various forms of monopoly now exist with perfect legal sanction, and various forms exist through evasion of the law. In railroads and public utilities prices are not set by competition, and have been unaffected by the depression. Patent monopolies protect large areas in electrical equipment, radio and the like. Steel is dominated by a few large corporations and, in certain lines like steel rails, the United States Steel Corporation has a virtual monopoly. In view of the relative steadiness of steel prices, it is no wonder that President James A. Farrell did not see much to be gained by further measures. Trade-association "ethics," backed up, not by formal and illegal agreement, but by fear of what may happen to the violator, are mobilized against price cuts. The failure of prices of many kinds of manufactured goods to fall is one of the outstanding features of the present depression.

Prices have already been stabilized in large sections of our economic order. But employment has not; indeed, the stabilization of employment in many cases appears to have been in inverse ratio to the stabilization of prices. One possible reason for this, expounded many times, is the fact that other, unprotected prices, have felt the full force of the depression. Farmers, suffering from deflation of cotton or wheat, can no longer buy farm machinery or automobiles made out of steel, which costs almost as much as ever. The inevitable result is decreased volume in the industries in which prices are held up. In Germany, no anti-trust laws have existed; cartels have long been encouraged in every trade. Yet Germany has suffered from depression, and Germany has been compelled to force the cartel-controlled prices down.

It is quite certain that no effective depression remedy can arise from price pegging in some parts of the system while prices are not pegged in other parts. There is reason to believe that this mixture of control with free competition makes matters worse than they otherwise would be. Why not, then, allow price control everywhere? But "allowing" control does not invariably assure control. We need only cite rubber, coffee, wheat, cotton. Valorization schemes have been proved pitfalls in situations where the authority which sets the price, or attempts to do so, cannot also limit the output. If price is maintained for a while, production is encouraged. Larger and larger credits are required to hold surplus stocks off the market. Eventually the balloon bursts, prices have a disastrous fall and the long and painful process of deflation is set in motion all along the line. There are numerous other important industries where control neither of output nor of prices has yet been tried, but where it is difficult to imagine such control operating by any device private enterprise could invent. Such an industry is bituminous coal in the United States. In oil, state troops have been called in to keep prices up. (Shades of "no government interference with business"!)

If, however, we imagine that private business should achieve control of production all along the line, industry by industry, we imagine a dangerous and intolerable situation. Each industry would be organized to restrict production in the interest of price maintenance. This would mean, to be sure, stable if not rising prices. But it would also mean

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a competitive restriction of the supply of goods on which the life of the people depends. Each industry, to keep its bargaining power in the general situation, would be tempted to turn out fewer and fewer goods. Such a system would run head-on against the social need for abolishing poverty, for a rising standard of living, and against the inherent trend of machine civilization itself toward larger productivity. It is quite possible that certain industries are equipped to produce more of their special products than could be consumed by the world's population, no matter how much money we had with which to buy them. But it is absurd to say that this is true of all industries at once. However much "overproduction" may annoy us during a depression, it is still, in the large, overproduction relative to existing purchasing power and not overproduction relative to needs and wants.

Industrial planning, carried out by separate industries in the interest of profits, and aimed at limiting output to the existing demand at the existing price, would be planning for stagnation. It would perpetuate poverty and unemployment. Industries must be organized as units, it is true, if we are to control the economic system, and production schedules must be laid out for them. But the control must be geared to a national purpose, and the schedules must be related to a program of increasing the general welfare, if the plan is to be worth having. It may be necessary to restrict production in some industries, or to raise or maintain the prices of their products. But it will also be necessary to expand production in other industries, and to lower prices wherever that is possible. For the only tenable aim of national economic planning is not stabilization by contraction, but enhancement of the general standard of living. The standard of living must, of course, be understood in the broadest terms. It must include security and leisure, as well as more material goods for those who haven't enough. But this aim inevitably means using our tremendous resources of materials, equipment and engineering skill so as to produce and distribute as many goods as we really want with the least possible waste, while it apportions the residuum of leisure in the form of shorter hours for secure and well paid workers rather than in the form of involuntary joblessness.

For this reason we must begin our planning, not by giving private industries greater "freedom" to fix prices, but by setting up a national planning agency which can draw up a general program of increasing popular purchasing power, as a basis for a production plan. Such an agency would have to devote its attention first of all to the low-wage areas, the sick industries. It would have to devise ways to organize bituminous coal, cotton textiles and the like in the interest of higher pay and greater security. On the other hand, it would have to organize industries like building construction for the purpose of giving better and more service at lower prices—it would necessarily expand the production of good housing for those in the lower income ranges, on the basis of regional planning and large-scale operations. It would have to pay much attention to the distributive trades, limit the number of useless competitive varieties, and expand the technique of specification and testing in behalf of the retail consumer. It would have to get the credit situation in hand, and find ways of controlling new capital investment that would link investment to the production plan and separate it from speculative vagaries.

Such activities are inconceivable without a central planning agency representing the whole public. They are inconceivable without the full participation of both government and labor. If private owners of industry believe that they alone can organize to serve the public interest, they are sadly misled. No doubt a central planning board, in seeking the necessary organization of the several industries, would find it advisable to ask for modifications of the anti-trust laws. But such modifications would be in the interest of substituting active public control. In some cases public ownership would undoubtedly be necessary. Even the trade-association type of organization might, in certain industries, prove to be useful as a step to something better. It is impossible to specify in advance the best type of treatment for each case. But the general prescription of freedom for separate industries to limit output, allot production or markets and maintain prices, is a prescription of still more of the disease from which we are already suffering.

A Federal Income Tax Credit

DEPRESSION has hit the finances of the state governments as well as those of the federal government. State tax collections have shrunk this year to an alarming extent. It is evident that the states, as well as the nation, must either seek new sources of tax revenues or else increase the rates of their present taxes.

At first glance, it would appear that the state governments have a reservoir of additional tax revenue at hand in the income tax. In 1911 Wisconsin enacted its income tax and showed the country that a state income tax was administratively practicable. At present twenty-three states tax either personal income or corporation income or both, and there is no longer any question about the ability of state governments to levy, assess and collect income taxes. With few exceptions, the rate schedules of the state personal income taxes are progressive, but their rates are absurdly low. The Wisconsin income tax with its maximum rate of 7 percent is an outstanding exception; the common maximum rate of the state personal income taxes is 3 percent. The rates of the corporation income taxes range between 2 and 4.5 percent. Why should not the states at present without income taxes levy such taxes? Why should not the states with

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low-rate income taxes increase the rates of these taxes? The principles of income taxation have the unanimous approval of economists. There are no constitutional limitations that bar the use of this tax by the states. Two decades of experience by pioneering states have shown that a state income tax can be successfully administered.

The legislatures and tax authorities of New York, of Massachusetts and of other states have repeatedly averred that they would gladly derive a greater revenue from their income taxes, but that they are barred from so doing by the existence of a system of fiscal hijacking. There exists a group of states, notorious among which are Florida, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, which endeavor to induce rich individuals and large business enterprises to settle within their borders by the lure of tax exemption. Florida went so far as to adopt, in 1924, an amendment to its state constitution forbidding its legislature ever to levy an income or an inheritance tax, and advertised openly that this action was taken with a view to making Florida a preferred residence for millionaires. New Jersey political leaders have freely admitted that the tax system of that state is tailored, in many of its features, to attract rich New Yorkers to shift their residence across the Hudson.

Suppose New York were to levy a progressive personal income tax with a rate schedule mounting to a maximum of 10 percent. Before the ink of the Governor's signature on the act was dry, she would see every resident of New York City with an income large enough to be subject to the high rates move across the Hudson and establish his official residence in one of the garden towns behind the Palisades. True, the income that such individuals derived from business operations in New York would still be subject to the New York income tax, but millions upon millions of dollars of investment income would escape. To a lesser extent, an increase of corporation income-tax rates would cause incorporated business enterprises to succumb to the lures of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and other states which offer freedom from taxation as a bait for settlement.

No quarrel could be found with any state which, through the operation of economies in its state and local governments, was able to boast of a lower general level of taxes than its sister states. Such fiscal competition would be healthy and a beneficial influence for the country as a whole. But no condemnation can be too severe for the fiscal hijacking whereby one state seeks to steal a particular class or group of taxpayers from its neighbors by offering them special favors at the expense of the rest of its own taxpayers.

It is within the power of this winter's Congress to end this interstate hijacking in the income-tax field and to permit those states that so desire to derive a suitable and sizable revenue from their income taxes. Let Congress increase the rates of the federal income tax so that the schedule shall range from one percent on small incomes to 40 percent or so on incomes in excess of a million dollars. Heavy though such an income-tax schedule would be compared to our present rates, it would still be considerably lighter than those found in many European countries. Then let it be provided that all payments of state income taxes up to a maximum of one-quarter of the amount of the federal tax shall be allowed as a deduction from the federal tax.

With such a credit clause in the federal income-tax law, the income-tax states could increase their rates until they just equaled one-quarter of the federal rates without thereby adding to the income-tax burden of their residents. The additional state revenue resulting from these rate increases would come, not from the taxpayers of these states, but from the federal government. Meanwhile Florida, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and the other states without income taxes would be stripped of their power of bidding away rich residents.

Such a tax credit would not be without precedent. Since 1924 a similar credit has been a feature of the federal estate tax. It has been tested in the courts and found constitutional. At a stroke it abolished a cutthroat competition among the states for the residence of rich men by offering their estates exemption from death taxation or extremely low death-tax rates. It has permitted the states to triple their revenue from death taxes in the course of the past seven years. It has made possible a degree of uniformity in state death taxation previously thought beyond the possibility of achievement.

Note how opportunely the project would fit into the federal program for raising additional revenue for a short period of time. It would be two or three years before any considerable number of the states would enact income-tax laws taking full advantage of the credit. Meanwhile the federal government would receive the additional revenue which the increase in the rates of the federal tax would bring. By the time the state income taxes were drawing any significant part of the income-tax revenue away from the federal government, the crisis in the latter's revenue needs might well have passed.

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EDITORS

BRUCE BLIVEN MALCOLM COWLEY R. M. LOVETT
GEORGE SOULE STARK YOUNG

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

JOHN DEWEY WALDO FRANK ALVIN JOHNSON
E. C. LINDEMAN LEWIS MUMFORD GILBERT SELDES
R. G. TUGWELL LEO WOLMAN

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Britain's Strangest Election

IF THE PURPOSE of an election be, as they think in Russia, to register national unanimity, this British election is a remarkable success. With a margin of 10 percent, unanimity has been achieved. One may doubt, however, whether representative democracy could survive a second experiment on these lines. Our antiquated electoral mechanism has produced an unparalleled distortion of opinion. Labor's poll fell from 8,300,000 to 6,600,000, while its representation at Westminster dropped from 287 to 52; thus, with more than half the Tory poll, it has obtained less than one-ninth of the Tory strength in the house. More serious than this decline in numbers is the deterioration in quality and debating power. Lansbury and Maxton are the only survivors whom one can call leaders, and their appeal is emotional only. Half of the Labor party in Parliament now consists of miners, whose hereditary class loyalty withstood the general panic. Only one member was returned capable of presenting a reasoned case for Labor's economic opinions —Sir Arthur Cripps, a recent recruit and a lawyer. Inevitably Lloyd George will become the leader of the opposition and will gravitate to Labor's ranks.

Our crude electoral mechanism converted Labor's reverse into a rout. The reverse was caused by the systematic propagation of vague but terrifying fear. The Bishop of London told good churchmen their pounds would be worth exactly a penny one month after a Labor victory. MacDonald brandished a million-mark bill of the inflation period at the women of Seaham. In three typical constituencies which I visited, in the industrial midlands, London and a rural southern county, the final argument was identical—a circular letter inserted by employers in the pay envelope threatening closing of the works if Labor won. Farmers to my personal knowledge called men together and threatened general dismissal if the Labor candidate was elected. These crude methods were partially successful amid the general ignorance of the mysteries of currency. If one realizes the power of fear working on minds which faced these issues for the first time after the shattering effect of their leaders' desertion, one is surprised that Labor lost only 20 percent of its adherents. Tariffs played only a minor part in the election. The dominant issue was a restoration of confidence in British solvency.

How far, the reader will ask, had Labor provoked this reaction of fear? Inflation was no part of its policy, but unquestionably it had challenged the City of London. It dared point out that the City, by borrowing short and lending long, endangered British credit. It opposed the grim policy of deflation which lames industry but enhances the value of every creditor's claim. It had lost faith in a gold standard which the world's bankers have failed to administer, and had proposed in its place a managed currency designed to preserve a stable price level. This would be admirable for industry, but would affect adversely the powerful interests which promote international usury and investment. They stand rather for a stable exchange value of sterling than for a stable price level. Labor, in fact, represented old industrial England against the more recent banking autocracy. Once the world's workshop, we are now the world's bank. By dim instinct, the masses understood that the bankers' policy must render a great part of our population forever superfluous.

The City has won, but has paid a heavy price. It may now proceed by remorseless deflation to bring sterling back to gold at the highest attainable parity, but to win manufacturers' and farmers' support it must acquiesce in tariffs. This combination of contradictory policies must subject the wage earners to an intolerable Calvary. While the government's example of cuts in salaries and the dole is a signal for reduction of money wages, the fall of sterling and the threat of tariffs means a drop in real wages also. While this goes on, deflation will continue. The combination of higher prices with contraction of credit is the ugliest form of scientific torture which a malicious economist could devise.

With this economic background, I do not predict for the National government a smooth or easy life. The general belief is that MacDonald is now a prisoner of the overwhelming Tory majority. This view underestimates his strategical finesse. Should his position in the Cabinet become intolerable, he has in his hands the right to dissolve Parliament. The national hero might beckon his old party once more to his side, flatter the parasitic Liberals, and form yet another combination, this time for the destruction of the Tories. Already he is feeling his way towards a less perilous balance of power. This was a plebiscite rather than an election, and it has placed our destinies in the hands of a man who thinks in terms rather of tactics than construction. Nothing is certain save that the Victorian era is ended and that the first engagement of open class warfare has resulted for Labor in momentary defeat. More interesting for history than this reverse is the fact that, for the first time in its record, this sober reformist Labor party did, by proposing social ownership and control of banking, make a bid for economic power. The defeated leaders are for most part as opportunist as MacDonald himself and will tend to favor whatever policy will bring them promptly back to Westminster, but behind them stand the labor unions which have been roused by the crisis into genuine militancy. MacDonald will try to sat-

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isfy his Tory allies without finally alienating that portion of his former party which would welcome him back. He will stand for a firm policy in India, and already he proposes to restrict the liberties of rebellious Cyprus. He will concede some form of tariff, which the Tories desire chiefly because it may lead to a reduction of the direct taxes on wealth; but he will, I believe, set some limits to their attacks on social services and insurance. This cautious general will secure his line of retreat. The national unanimity achieved for one day at this election will soon be dissipated in an orgy of strategy and intrigue.

The strangest election that ever took place in the British Isles is now history. For the third time in my generation, patriotism has been mobilized for the advantage of a party and a class. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain set the model, when he staged the "Khaki" election, midway in the Boer War. Mr. Lloyd George surpassed that first immature essay when he carried his Coalition to triumph during the Armistice in 1918. Mr. MacDonald followed where they led. Always it is a former radical who on these occasions takes command of the forces of property. Always the excuse is the magnitude and novelty of the national task, which calls for a united front behind the hero of the hour. Always a ministry which enjoys a sufficient majority dissolves, without apparent necessity, in the hope of obtaining an overwhelming vote. Always it contrives to create an atmosphere of hysteria. The peculiarity in this case was that there was no foreign enemy. In the distinguished precedents which Mr. MacDonald followed, a vote for the Opposition was stigmatized as a vote for the Boers or the Germans: now the enemy was of our own blood. The "nation," which means for all who understand the correct use of our English tongue, the middle and propertied class, is ranged against the labor unions and the Socialists. The purpose of the election was frankly avowed by the "national" press. It was to render the Labor party impotent (for no one hopes to destroy it) during the five formative years that lie before us.

To state the issue with greater precision would be difficult. The program of our national hero was his national heroism and nothing more. A careful study of the manifesto and his speeches fails to discover a single definite statement of his intentions in any one of the controversies that divide us. Will he return to the gold standard? Probably he will try to do so, but at what parity? Will he attempt to please the bankers and the investing class by a new effort at deflation, designed to bring the pound, through incredible sacrifices and privations, back to the old parity with the dollar and gold? Will he boldly devalue it, by stabilizing it at something near its present exchange value, and inflict, by so doing, a heavy loss on the persons of property who are now his chief supporters? No one knows, least of all, I imagine, the national hero himself. Having given, by the cuts in the salaries of teachers and civil servants, and in the "dole," the signal for the general reduction of wage levels, will he pursue this policy of starving the internal markets? For a tariff, he tells us, he is prepared, but there our information stops. Will it average 10 or 30 percent? Will it satisfy his new friends, Lord Beaverbrook and the Empire Crusaders, by barring our ports to foreign foodstuffs and raw materials? Will it enable the British farmer to grow wheat at a profit? Will it purge our shores from the contamination of Soviet eggs and Red lumber? But why pursue the vain inquiry? Mr. MacDonald, who always loathed programs and reveled in ambiguity, has realized his highest ambition. He will lead a ministry free from the inconvenience of any pledge, promise or definition of policy which on a close construction could be held to mean anything whatever.

You know, of course, the explanation which Mr. MacDonald himself gave for this unusual silence—for reticence is rarely practised at elections. The nation is sick: at this election it was choosing its "doctor." Returned to Downing Street, in the seclusion of its historic laboratory, he will test our blood pressure, put his ear to the stethoscope, and prescribe, as silence may dictate, a course of starvation, a purgative or even an old-fashioned bloodletting. For my own part, I doubt whether the procedure can follow the usages of orthodox science. There are many consulting physicians to be called in, and they too were elected. They have not emulated the self-restraint of Dr. MacDonald. They will enter the hospital with their prescriptions already made out. It is not stethoscope or microscope which has decided whether our malady was galloping consumption, or merely the after-effects of the subnormal temperature of prolonged deflation. That depended on the percentage of Tories in Mr. MacDonald's following. Since they achieved an absolute and overwhelming majority, even without the aid of Sir John Simon's Ultra-National Liberals, the diagnosis is already complete. Our disease is one for which tariffs, and high tariffs at that, are the appropriate remedy. If the Tories had been disappointed in this hope, if the national majority, that is to say, had been obtained only with the aid of the less national Liberals who follow Sir Herbert Samuel, and of Mr. MacDonald's own "National Socialists" (not to be confused with Hitler's adherents who also use this name), then diagnosis and remedy might both have called for prolonged and doubtful consideration. The less National Liberals profess themselves unbending Free Traders, though they will yield, so they tell us, to argument, after prolonged and impartial study. The physicians, as we all know, had argued round the sickbed, after their hasty prescription of a lowered diet, through three dreary weeks. They failed to find even an ambiguous formula which would conceal their differences.

If the first issue in this election is the infliction of a smashing defeat on Labor (which dislikes the

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exercise of the surgeon's art upon its standard of life), the second is, as clearly, the elimination of the Liberal party. It escaped in the crisis from the leadership of Mr. Lloyd George, disabled for some months to come by a serious operation. Under a superfluity of leaders, it broke, as it is always apt to do, into three sections. The right wing rallied to Sir John Simon, declared without ambiguity for tariffs, proclaimed its faith in the national hero (since heroes in a divinely ordered world dispense office) and went without fear or scruple into the election. Why should it fear? It had the promise, in the seats which it held, of a solid Tory vote. The Center had scruples, for it had fears. It was badly compromised by its free-trade past. It could not, or could not often, reckon on Tory support. In throwing over its leader it lost the war chest which he controls—that cogent argument for Liberal principles drawn from the sale of peerages to profiteers. Finally, a letter from its headquarters leaked into the press, which peremptorily advised its candidates, while bowing to the national hero and supporting the "national" government, to fight Protectionists wherever they could do so without risking the loss of a seat to Labor. That disclosure has, I think, sealed the Liberal party's fate. Its only reason for existence lay in its opposition to tariffs, yet it will support a Premier who means to introduce them; it will fight Tories who ardently demand them (while also supporting him), but its overmastering fear was a Labor victory, though Labor also opposes tariffs. It has entirely forgotten its bold scheme of constructive planning, the famous Yellow Book, and yielded to the momentary middle-class hysteria which sees in the Labor party the source of all evil. It will not live to fight another election. Its main body will vanish. Sir John Simon's group will survive as a wing of the Tory party. Mr. Lloyd George, with his fund and his family, will live on, to exhaust all the possibilities of political adventure. Four years ago in an article in Harper's Magazine, I wrote that nature designed Mr. MacDonald to lead the Tory party, but accident arranged that he should be born in a blacksmith's smithy. Nature has had her way. Of Mr. Lloyd George I said that his temperament marked him out to lead the Left wing of Labor, but his past barred the road to that vacant chair.

Over the sideshows in this amusing but very cynical election one should not dally. Neither the Liberals, nor Sir Oswald Mosley's semi-fascist "New party," nor even the Prime Minister himself, could have affected the result. The real issue was a naked class struggle in which the Tories, with their auxiliary troops, were ranged against the working class.

What then are the prospects and what is the mood of the victim of this election? Given a few months in which to recover from the shock of its leader's desertion, it might have made a far better showing. Even in the midst of defeat, it is apparent that the mass of its working-class members rallied with an instinctive militancy to the defense of their standards. The teachers, the post-office workers and the minor civil servants whose pay has been cut, worked for the return of its candidates. For many, the excitements of this crisis almost wiped out the memory of the Labor government's failure in the economic field.

On the other hand, the mood of the average man and woman in these black days has been one of depression, bewilderment and fear. The economy panic ranged downwards from the ministries to the remotest village. County councils stopped work on the roads. Building schemes for schools were ruthlessly canceled. In terror of the uncertain future, companies and individuals followed their betters, and reduced staffs and restricted orders. Where, as in the densely peopled North, the workers have an outlook of their own, they reacted with indignation against all this folly. In the South and in the villages, the effect on their minds is rather one of terror, and they dared not offend the class which still has work to bestow. They were bewildered, moreover, when they saw their three trusted leaders in the camp of the class enemy. Whom can they trust? The case was rendered gravely worse by the fact that most of Mr. MacDonald's colleagues, incredible though it ought to be, had consented, before the breach, to most of the cuts which they now oppose. Office and assimilation to the governing class had demoralized the upper ranks of Labor.

It is, I think, surprising, after the poor record of recent years, that the party sees its position with an approach to clearness. It understands that the late Labor government went down before the dictation of the bankers. It realizes that they have, by their policy of deflation, governed our whole economic life through a decade. It grasps the fact that the reconstruction of our economic life can begin only when the key positions are under the nation's control. Its program proposes, therefore, nothing less than the socialization of banking and the control of investment. It cuts, by the only tolerable Socialist solution, clean through the classical controversy of free trade. Tariffs it rejects, but only to propose in their place the control of imports and exports by boards modeled on the drastic wartime lines. This brief program (which included also the reversal of the economy acts, devaluation of the pound and the nationalization of coal mining) differs sharply from previous essays, which were mere jumbles of unrelated social reforms. It aims at the seats of power. It would seize the strategic positions from which a national plan can be imposed. One may doubt whether these hesitating leaders would have the spirit or the will even to attempt a decisive struggle with the banks. But in words at least they have outlined it. The party may be hardened by defeat, and grow to the task which it has set itself.

H. N. BRAILSFORD.

London.

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An Open Letter to Walter Lippmann

DEAR Walter Lippmann: It has been a pleasure to have you back in The Herald Tribune writing over your own name and pursuing your own interests and ideas independently of the editorial policy of a newspaper. But some of your readers got a shock the other day when they read you on Bernard Shaw and Russia.

In the first place, you express astonishment that Shaw should approve of the Soviets and consider that they have "solved the problem which the rest of us are struggling with." You describe him as "excited" and "naïve." Yet Bernard Shaw has been a socialist ever since he read Karl Marx in the eighties: he can certainly not be accused of having made a secret of this fact and you can certainly not be supposed to be ignorant of it. Why, then, should you be astonished by his enthusiasm for the Socialist Republics? Moreover, is it not quite plain that Shaw's recent visit to Russia and his public statements since he has been back, so far from being excited and naïve, were deliberately timed to coincide with the fall of the Labor government in England and designed to dissociate him henceforward from the further career of MacDonald and to identify him with the Left of the labor movement?

In your article, however, the question of socialism is never brought into the discussion at all. In reading you, it would be almost impossible to discover that any such thing existed and absolutely impossible to discover that it was a social-economic program which differed fundamentally from capitalism. In your earlier days, I seem to remember, you served in the administration of a Socialist mayor of Schenectady; but if any inkling of the meaning of socialism reached you then, you have evidently forgotten it by now altogether. You have managed to forget it so completely that you are able to talk as if there were no important difference between capitalist America and Communist Russia—as if America and Russia were the same thing, merely in different stages of development, with America the further advanced of the two! "The truth is," you write, "that Russian Communism has not yet grown up to the problems which capitalism is facing." And, "That the Russian effort is impressive I should not for a moment deny. But it is impressive like the opening of the West, like the rise of manufacturing industry in Great Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In its economic aspects it is impressive not as a solution of our present problems, but as another way of solving the problems we have already solved. Only when the Russians have multiplied many times their capacity to produce shall we find out whether they have some magic device for producing just the right quantity of each thing at just the right time."

"Another way of solving the problems we have already solved"! What problems? Technical problems? The problems of business organization? These are the only problems that America has solved. And is this—industrial development as such—all that Communism means? Is it for this that the Russian Soviets have taken over all the national resources and all the means of production? that they have set up a central board of engineers to see that the farms and factories produce what is needed, that they produce it as economically as possible, and that the people get it after it is produced? a central control which, even in the event of the Russians' "multiplying many times their capacity to produce," will be able to slow up production, to shift labor from one industry to another and to go on to the manufacturing of new kinds of foods as our own uncontrolled system can never do. Is it for such achievements as this uncontrolled system can boast that the Soviets have made private profit illegal? that they have ploughed up their society from the bottom layer and put all the citizens on an equal footing, with equal chances of health, security and education. instead of allowing their country to be run in the interests of a class of manufacturers and financiers so short-sighted, unimaginative and selfish that they cannot keep their own system in order? was it for the solution of such problems as have been solved by this kind of industry and finance—was it for the Taylor plan, the chain store, the Ford plant, the monopolies of U. S. Steel and Standard Oil—that Marx and Lenin and how many others endured exile and prison and gave long years of exacting work which brought them no American fortunes in compensation? is it for this that in America at this moment men and women are still willing to suffer prison, exile, violence and death?

Years ago, when the Soviet government was new, you and Charles Merz prepared for The New Republic a report which showed how the capitalist New York Times had falsified the news of Russian Communism. But today it seems to me that such an article of yours as this is more misleading than the squealing and sneering of the reactionary capitalist press. When one reads this latter, one knows at least that there is something more than a mere difference of degrees of efficiency between the United States and the Soviet Republics—one cannot very well fail to discover that the property question is painfully involved. But when one reads you, one gets the impression that the difference between our middle-class republic based on the profit system and the dictatorship of the proletariat which makes private profit a crime is not a social difference at all. Communism a "magic device"! It is a program to create a classless society—as you must know as

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well as anyone. And "the rise of the manufacturing industry in Great Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century"! You must take newspaper readers for very innocent persons—you must assume that all your old audience of educated people has deserted you—when you compare one of the foulest episodes of human exploitation with the unprecedented opening of a regime which is designed to make exploitation impossible. You are talking today as if politics and economics were not a matter of human beings at all. Occupying yourself with the maneuvers and manipulations of banks and political factions, you allow us to forget that all such maneuvers and manipulations are nothing more nor less than attempts on the part of men and women to attain, defend or raise standards of living—of the starving and dispossessed to get food and shelter, of the comfortable to hang on to their cars and radios, of the rich to maintain their cars, their servants, their expensive food and their expensive houses. The primary question today is who is to do without what. You are a long way now, it seems to me, from the days when you wrote for The New Republic your eloquent supplement on the minimum wage.

And at this time when the American public—one of the worst educated politically in the world—needs political education so much, isn't it a serious matter for a writer of your rank to allow it to remain in ignorance of the fundamental issues involved? A little while ago you were exposing the God of the orthodox churches. You brought to the task both relentlessness and tact, and you met with tremendous success. But God was already old—he was a pushover. Today there are other more dangerous myths to be discredited. Modern capitalism, with all the bogus ideals and intoxicating illusions with which it has bemused the Americans, is a far more formidable fraud. Why not tell your countrymen about it instead of attempting to patronize Bernard Shaw when he is only trying to do for us work which you ought to be doing yourself?

Yours with old admiration but with present consternation and alarm, EDMUND WILSON.

Exile's Return

IV: *Women Have One Breast*

THE NOVEMBER, 1923, issue of Broom, the one assembled after the disastrous meeting in Prince Street, was the best of the five published in New York, the nearest to our elastic ideal of what a magazine should be. Together with poems by E. E. Cummings, Wallace Stevens and William Carlos Williams, translations from the French of Roger Vitrac and Louis Aragon, and a Wall Street fantasy by Slater Brown, it contained an extraordinary story entitled "An Awful Storming Fire, or Her and I on a Journey to the Secret of the Sun, by the author who solved the mysterious riddle." The author was Charles L. Durboraw, a Chicago paperhanger whose gifts included a talent for writing in the vernacular and a vast ingenuousness. With more admirers, he might have reached a place in literature approaching that of le Douanier Rousseau in painting. "An Awful Storming Fire" is the story of a street-corner pickup. "Standing on a busy corner waiting for a street car and smoking a cigarette in one of the world's largest cities," the hero is accosted by a woman who soon confesses that "I used to be kind of sporty, but cut it out." She takes him to her empty apartment, explains that she "can read men like a book," shows him the parlor, the kitchen, the bedroom; and the story abruptly transforms itself into an enormous dream, an account of black shining forms like alligators and storms of fire into which the woman is engulfed. It ends with a moral: "I do know that man's laws punish us for our sins and that man gets these laws of his from the principle of nature's laws, and so it stands to reason that nature punishes us in different ways for our sins the same as man's laws." Unfortunately for the editors of Broom, the story, moral and all, was extremely readable. The postal censorship is rigorous toward little magazines, but often their mild indecency is too abstract or involved to be understood by the authorities. "An Awful Storming Fire," written by a paperhanger, was exactly on the level of the censor's comprehension. He warned us indirectly that we had better mend our ways.

In those days the acting post-office censor was known in New York magazine offices as "Mr. Smith"; I have forgotten his real name. He received a comfortable salary from the government and a larger one from several of the sexy magazines then at the height of their popularity. His duty toward them consisted in reading each issue before publication and making changes to meet the postal standards. The chief standard, perhaps, was anatomical. That every woman has one breast was Mr. Smith's rockbound conviction: he was willing to permit any number of seductions in print as long as the willing victim was not a two-breasted woman. Naturally he was most considerate of the magazines that paid him the largest retainers. He barred occasional issues from the mails, as a matter of form, but was always careful to see that the suppression was not financially harmful—that it did not take place until the issue had been distributed to subscribers. For this obligingness he atoned by his

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severity toward little unpopular magazines. He was very angry about "An Awful Storming Fire," even though it complied with the single-breasted standard. He discussed it with a sex-magazine editor of our acquaintance, explaining that he hadn't read the story until it was too late to take action. "But those guys better watch out. I'll read the next issue before it's mailed, and if I find anything the least bit off-color, I'll stop it like that—" He snapped his fingers.

The threat disturbed us. We were experienced enough to know that postal censorship, though it sometimes helps the powerful magazines with money enough to publicize the event and thereby increase their circulation, is disastrous for periodicals that must struggle from month to month without resources. The total resources of Broom had lately vanished. They had consisted, since August, of a printer sufficiently interested in modern art to stand a loss on each successive issue. But the loss had proved greater than his literary enthusiasm: he had just informed us that the November number of Broom had been the last he would print, except for cash paid in advance.

In the life of every magazine published for art's sake, there is a moment when the subvention is definitely withdrawn. The editors assemble dolefully; they review their exploits in the cause of letters; they assure one another that a place and a public undoubtedly exist for a magazine such as theirs; they decide whether to struggle on or expire gently in the parched wind. Usually they decide to struggle on. They issue appeals to which their readers are infallibly deaf. They frantically search for new benefactors, for those with thousands to give, for those with hundreds, for any kind soul, at last, who will contribute five or ten dollars toward the printer's bill. They begin subscription campaigns that are doomed to failure; successful campaigns cost money. They reduce costs by ceasing to pay their contributors, by printing smaller issues.

Usually the history of a little magazine is summarized in its format. The first issue consists, let us say, of sixty-four pages, with half-tone illustrations printed on coated paper. The second issue has sixty-four pages, illustrated with line cuts. The third has only forty-eight pages; the fourth has thirty-two, without illustrations; the fifth never appears. Broom had surpassed this formula: it could boast of twenty issues, extending over three years; after being published in Rome, it had reappeared in Berlin, had been reborn in New York; but in dying it followed the established pattern. Its size was of course reduced; its contributors were to go unpaid. Josephson, who had been receiving a small salary for his work as managing editor, took a job in Wall Street, pimping, as I expressed it, for a brokerage house. The two of us agreed to edit the magazine in our spare time, with such help as Slater Brown could give us from Woodstock. We found a new printer, cheaper if less charitably inclined: our next issue of thirty-two pages would cost only $250. All that remained was to raise $250.

Part of this sum we contributed ourselves. The rest had to be begged from acquaintances none of whom was wealthy. I can remember the month of December as a series of luncheons with this man or that, a continued exposition of our plans, a long plea that resulted sometimes in a check for five or ten dollars, sometimes in an embarrassed refusal. There was no time for rest or reflection. We consoled ourselves, as we neared the goal, by saying that the next month would be easier, that new subscriptions would be received and money from bookshops, that the deficit would be no greater than we could cover from our white-collar salaries.

In the mornings I sometimes dozed at my desk, but the idle season had ended and office duties were rapidly piling up. In the evenings, working till we fell asleep over unread manuscripts, Josephson and I prepared the January issue, that for December having been tacitly omitted. The issue wouldn't be one of our best, but we set great store by a philosophical narrative which Kenneth Burke had just completed, an "ethical masque" into which he had ingeniously condensed all his theories of art and living. "Prince Llan," it is true, was in places too outspoken to meet the requirements of the postal authorities, but it was the sort of thing which Broom existed to publish—and if we couldn't publish it, what was the use of our continuing the struggle? We reassured ourselves by saying that it was too abstruse for Mr. Smith. In our weariness we failed to notice that, on the first page, in the third paragraph, it referred to plural-breasted women.

As we continued raising money, writing letters, editing manuscripts, our minds grew weary and our nerves uncertain. We quarreled with each other, with the world in general. Crowds, whistles, skidding taxicabs, all the discomforts of the city were a personal affront. In my uneasy sleep I trembled when a subway local passed underneath me, gathering speed as it left the Canal Street station. I had nightmares in which I suffered from the malice directed against contemporary art. Was there a general conspiracy of slander? Emerson Hough, in a statement issued just after his death, had accused the young intellectuals of being unpatriotic by conviction, East European by descent, unclean morally and physically, adenoidal, garlicky and syphilitic. All this was too violent to be dangerous, but other critics adopted subtler methods of attack. I came to believe that a general offensive was about to be made against modern art, an offensive based on the theory that all modern writers, painters and musicians were homosexual. The Broom offices on King Street received letters that mentioned Oscar Wilde. Envelopes were addressed to Broom at "45 Queer Street." I began to feel harried and combative, like Aubrey Beardsley forced to defend his masculinity against whispers. When the first issue of The American Mercury appeared, with Ernest

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Boyd's portrait of a modern esthete, I was prepared to discover slanders which the article did not set forth.

Slanders it really contained, but of a different type. "Esthete: Model 1924" was a composite portrait, based on the early careers of Gilbert Seldes, Kenneth Burke, Edmund Wilson and Matthew Josephson, with touches borrowed, I should say, from John Dos Passos, E. E. Cummings, myself, Gorham B. Munson and John Farrar. The resulting hero, a spraddling, disproportionate creature, was endowed by his author with a name, a a history and several pansylike gestures. His associates were those who avowed their "intention of not being he-men"; his dreams were "haunted by fears of Sodom and Gomorrah"; but I can see, on rereading the article after a lapse of eight years, that Mr. Boyd made these remarks with innocence; he did not mean to descend beneath the standards of ordinary pamphleteering.

The ordinary methods of pamphleteering are not at all lofty: they chiefly involve an appeal to the settled prejudices of the reader. Thus, to say that your opponent carries a cane, went to Harvard and is of dubiously Nordic ancestry is a means of attacking his literary standing, at least in the minds of those who are prejudiced against Harvard men, cane carriers and Jews. Mr. Boyd's Esthete had all these unpopular characteristics, and, in addition, he had been a slacker during the War, one who "by luck or cunning . . . succeeded in getting out of the actual trenches." He now lived in Greenwich Village, wrote free verse, drank synthetic gin, edited a little magazine and was obsessed with sex. Moreover—and here we approach a more serious accusation, offered as no sop to the groundlings, but sincerely as a heartfelt plaint—"the Esthete seeks to monopolize the field of contemporary foreign art."

It was in developing this theme that Mr. Boyd invented real slanders, which were, it should be added, of a purely commercial type. As critic, translator and editorial adviser, he himself had prospered in the field of contemporary foreign art. He was faced with competition from new sources. The best defense of his economic position would be to attack the scholarship of his competitors. This he did by citing their real or imaginary mistranslations, by exaggerating the errors they actually committed, by creating others where none existed—in brief, by a series of petty and exasperating misrepresentations. He was like a cigarette manufacturer spreading the rumor that another cigarette manufacturer mixed alfalfa with his product.

So the article impresses me as I read it today, with some curiosity and an occasional yawn. Eight years ago I failed to perceive these economic issues in my absorption with the moral-artistic standards I had carried with me from Paris. It seemed to me, simply, that a critic of some distinction was taking sides with the Philistines against his natural allies, was appealing to dangerous forms of prejudice, was making implications about the personal lives of people many of whom were my friends. "He ought to be punched in the jaw," I said. And the remark, being overheard, was repeated to Mr. Boyd with elaborations that concerned my character as a gangster and triggerman of letters: I was not merely going to punch his jaw, with my own horny and bloodstained fist; I was going to kneel on his chest and one by one pluck out the hairs of his beard. Mr. Boyd, who describes his character as timid and bookish, did not attempt to conceal his apprehension.

Knowing that "Esthete: Model 1924" was directed against others, that my own part in the composite portrait was negligible, a matter of two or three details, I had a feeling of noble disinterestedness in my anger. I regarded myself as a sort of deputy sheriff, sworn to uphold a code of literary conduct. I determined, in ignorance of the bloodthirsty rumors carried toward Gramercy Park from the Lower West Side, to see Mr. Boyd, explain my objections to his article, and request a private apology for certain passages. I telephoned to ask for an appointment. Mr. Boyd, after some hesitation, said that he could see no occasion for the visit I suggested. There was a note of terror in his voice that puzzled and amazed me. I assured him that the interview would be entirely peaceful; still he demurred. "Then you won't see me?" I said.

"No, I can only repeat that really, I mean we have nothing whatever to discuss."

His voice was shrill and unsteady: it somehow suggested my last evening at the Rotonde, the scurrying waiters, the proprietor with his dirty white face and frightened eyes. Seized with the same quick rage that swept over me before, I cursed over the telephone, delivering three round oaths before hanging up the receiver. The next day, still furious, I wrote Mr. Boyd a note in which I apologized for my profanity: I had merely wished to imply that he was a sneak, a liar and a coward.

This incident, reflecting little glory on either side, was the beginning of the Battle of the Esthetes and, simultaneously, of Mr. Boyd's well advertised martyrdom. For a time he must have suffered real discomfort; his opponents, however, were only partially responsible. They sent him a telegram which they thought to be funny; once, in the midst of a party, they telephoned his residence and held a pompous, leg-pulling conversation in which they found that he was their master at repartee. I rather discouraged these activities, holding that there was nothing more to be said; indeed, for my own part, I said nothing more. But Mr. Boyd's malicious friends refused to let the battle die so abruptly: it was too precious a subject for gossip. Trading on his known timidity, they assured him that his person was really endangered by hard-boiled, furious, blackjack-toting esthetes; they advised him to ask for police protection, then went about saying that he had followed their advice. He hesitated to leave his apartment. Burton Rascoe,

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in an amusing and hyperbolic attack on Boyd's enemies, pictured him as "barricaded behind his books, subsisting on depleted rations and grown wan and weary under the assaults and harassments." Once, on the street, he encountered Gilbert Seldes, a writer whose features were included in the portrait of the imaginary Esthete. Seldes harbored no grudge and raised his walking stick in friendly greeting. Mr. Boyd, however, interpreted this gesture as a threat and walked hurriedly away. Seldes followed him, having a message to deliver. Mr. Boyd walked faster. Seldes shouted and quickened his pace. It is easy to imagine the spectacle of these two distinguished critics, both of them sedentary and peaceful by disposition, one of them fleeing with terror dogging his footsteps, the other pursuing with an uplifted cane and the most amicable intentions.

Mr. Boyd doubtless retired into his book-barricaded study, there to fulminate against the two-fisted, hairy-chested esthetes who were threatening his days. Once seated at his desk, he had all the courage that failed him in public. He wrote vehemently; he abounded in diatribes against Greenwich Village and little magazines and myself; he poured forth abuse and ridicule in the best eighteenth-century manner; he was Voltaire at Ferney annihilating his rivals with sledgehammer blows of wit. Like Voltaire, he did not hesitate to present the truth in a revised version. He announced, with a who-is-this-person air adopted from his great models, that he had never even heard of his opponents until they came bursting into his life. This purely tactical misstatement led him fatally into making another: how else could he explain his terror? He therefore asserted that I, over the telephone, had explicitly offered to beat him up.

Both these misstatements, I think, were tactical blunders. There is no use misrepresenting your opponents if the truth in itself is sufficiently damaging; and the truth in this case was damaging enough. I had made myself ridiculous by applying standards of ethics to a situation which called for standards of salesmanship. I had behaved much as I did on July 14, in Paris, but all my favorite catchwords could now be turned against me. New York had catchwords of its own, which I had deliberately forgotten. My *disinterestedness* was interpreted there as a meddlesome effort to push myself forward, to break the front page. My *significant gesture* was a silly touchiness, an offense taken where none was intended. My *manifestation* was a flop. I had been *violent, arbitrary, indiscreet:* what more need be said to cover me with confusion. My witnesses and allies were no longer *des gens très bien;* they could be dismissed as Greenwich Village rowdies. And my opponents, cultivating their advantage, were about to flourish exceedingly.

Mr. Boyd, that year, was a literary hero and a commercial success. No list of the most prominent critics was compiled without mentioning his name. No magazine was complete without one of his imaginary portraits. The American Mercury, having published the first of these, was launched on a profitable career: copies of the January issue, exhausted on the newsstands, were already selling at a premium. The Battle of the Esthetes was monopolizing literary gossip; the esthetes themselves were covered with ridicule, and silent. Even had they wished to fight back, they no longer possessed a magazine in which to print their rejoinders. For, on January 14, in the midst of the tumult aroused by the battle, another blow had fallen. Broom had been suppressed under Section 480 of the Postal Laws, which prohibits the mailing of contraceptives and other obscene matter.

I learned of the event that morning before setting out for the office. A mail truck stopped in front of the house on Dominick Street; two postal employees jumped from the seat, asked for me by name, held a short consultation, and struggled into the cellar with six heavy bags containing our January issue. I telephoned Josephson, who had already been notified of the suppression. We conferred hastily with a lawyer; he gave us no encouragement whatever. Coming when it did, the blow was fatal. Had we possessed the money with which to continue, it would have meant no more than the loss of a single issue; at present it meant the loss of all the resources on which we depended for the future. We might of course repeat our labors of the preceding month; we might somehow assemble money enough to pay the printer and publish another number under the hostile supervision of Mr. Smith, but we were utterly tired and discouraged. We did what we could under the circumstances. We tried for the first time to get newspaper publicity, thinking it might help the magazine; we telephoned prominent people to ask for statements; we examined our files of accepted manuscripts, planned statements and editorials; but this was done almost mechanically; the spirit had gone out of it.

The temper of the country was against us. Our aims were incomprehensible, even to the limited public for which we wrote; our actions seemed immature and pompous and absurd. The American Mercury, with its easy incredulity, its middle-agedness, its belligerent philistinism, was the expression of a prevailing mood. Broom was dead, with all the activities planned to center about it. I refused to admit my discouragement: "We'll stick to our guns," I said. But five months after my return from Europe, I was dispirited, exhausted, licked—by Mr. Smith and Mr. Boyd, by the anarchism of fellow writers and the apathy of life in New York, but most of all by myself, by my efforts to apply in one country the standards I had brought from another.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

In his last article, "Manhattan Melody," Mr. Cowley tells how the exiles finally readjusted themselves to life in New York.—THE EDITORS.

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Huey Long of Louisiana

WITH AN OUTBURST of manifestoes, calls to arms, threats, fulminations and all the fanfare which has attended every major act of his political career, Huey Long has reiterated his determination to hang on to the governorship of Louisiana until his term expires in May. Meanwhile his seat in the United States Senate, which he refuses to accept while he is still Governor, remains unoccupied, and will so remain until May if he succeeds in defeating the strenuous efforts to oust him which his political enemy, Lieutenant Governor Paul Cyr, has during recent weeks renewed with increased violence.

But though the present battle may be the most spectacular of his career, it is by no means the most remarkable. For Huey Long's rise to eminence and the bossdom of his state has been marked by a flagrant and phenomenal disregard of all the orthodox maxims for political success in his section. In a state where Jacksonian simplicity is rigidly enforced, he has surrounded himself with the splendors of Diocletian. When the farmers clamored for reduced taxes, he answered by tearing down the executive mansion at Baton Rouge and made the state borrow $150,000 to build a new one. And when drought-relief agitation was at its height last year, Huey Long decided that what the state really needed was a new $5,500,000 capitol, even at the expense of hospitals, schools for the blind, state colleges—and the farmers.

In Louisiana there is the usual political cleavage between "the city" and "upstate." Yet Long dared propose a tax on the upstate rural districts for the exclusive benefit of the wicked metropolis. Moreover, he proposed it in the fall of 1930, when the cotton growers on the small farms of north Louisiana were tightening up their belts and living on corn and sowbelly. This tax was to be levied on gasoline, which included gasoline used for farm trucks, tractors and farm machinery, even though fully 50 percent of the income was to be used exclusively by the port of New Orleans.

Yet, for all his disregard of the farmers' desire for relief or the traditions and customs of his state, he was swept into the Senate that fall by an overwhelming majority.

Huey Long was born on a little red-clay farm near Winnfield, Louisiana, and passed a boyhood like that of any other average farm youngster. Though he made an early contact with books, it was not exactly like Lincoln's. With him there was no poring over worn tomes by firelight, no riding a tired mule along muddy roads to borrow another precious volume. Huey Long's first contact with books was selling them. For, at the age of fourteen, chancing to see an itinerant book peddler in his home town, Huey Long realized that there were easier methods of earning one's living than plowing and hoeing or picking cotton. So getting credit from a publishing house for a number of odd lots of Bibles, sets of Shakespeare, dictionaries and a number of copies of "The Mistress of Paris," he set forth to sell culture in the nearby territory. After a brief trip he returned, not only with a handsome profit but with the even more profitable knowledge that he could sell anybody anything.

Such was the beginning of his career. As a salesman he rose rapidly in the ranks until he had obtained the position of sales manager for a starch company. Nevertheless, a deep yearning for public office was nourished within him, and realizing that law was the surest path to political power, he borrowed $400 from his brother and, with his wife, whom he had met during one of his sales tours, he left Memphis, where he was living, and moved to New Orleans. Here he plunged into an intensive study of law and applied himself so industriously that in seven months he had covered the three-year course and passed the bar examination with flying colors.

Though a lawyer with his own shingle, Long was still forced to support himself for a time by house-to-house selling. But, after a brief period, he considered the time ripe for a definite political career. Rolling up his sleeves, he entered politics. At the moment there was a campaign on to fill a vacancy in the railroad commission from the northern Louisiana district and Long, with that disregard for Jacksonian simplicity which has characterized his political career ever since, bought, as the initial move in his campaign, one of the grandest and shiniest Overlands northern Louisiana had ever seen.

"Hell," Governor Long is reported to have said, "they told me I'd have to drive around in an old buggy with a horse, and wear slouchy clothes and chew tobacco. But not me. I had my shoes shined, and a clean white suit on every day, and drove around in an automobile. I wanted those folks to think I was something, and they did."

Huey Long has never been without public office since that time, and he has lost only one campaign. That was his first trial for the governorship in 1924. But he had prudently retained his railroad commissionership, just as he recently retained the gubernatorial chair while running for the Senate, and he kept right on being railroad commissioner.

Louisiana at once became aware that a new force had come into politics. For, on his entry into the lists, young Mr. Long wasted no time on such locutions as "beautiful women and brave

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men." He attacked. In his first appearance before a state-wide rally, he pleasantly referred to the Governor of Louisiana and the state fire marshal as "the criminal who disgraces the gubernatorial chair and his official barfly." With that keynote, sounded a dozen years ago, Huey Long began his political career.

Then came the gubernatorial campaign of 1924, Long's only unsuccessful attempt to win an election. He blamed it on the bad weather, which, he said, had kept his farm friends from voting. Still, he was reëlected to the railroad commissionership almost without trying, and quite as a casual matter, of course. But he still yearned for the governorship. To this end he supported United States Senator Edwin S. Broussard in the campaign of 1926.

The political cleavage in Louisiana on statewide affairs is largely between the north and south of the state. The latter is the fertile delta country, the "sugar bowl," populated by the descendants of the French and Acadian original settlers. It is, of course, predominantly Catholic. North Louisiana, on the other hand, is overwhelmingly Protestant. The Klan, which had been something of an issue a few years previously, was, of course, anathema to south Louisiana, though it flourished in the north. And while the Klan is today scarcely a memory, the fact that Huey Long, a north Louisiana Baptist, should campaign his native northern hills in behalf of Broussard, a Creole and a Catholic, unquestionably swinging the tide of victory in his favor and electing him, has never been forgotten by the French population of the sugar-bowl territory.

It was with this support of southern Louisiana that Huey Long was finally elected Governor in 1928. However, success seemed to turn his head completely. The legislative session that followed his inauguration was a gay chaos. Long violated every precedent and propriety from the outset. He wielded the patronage club baldly and openly. A legislator who wanted jobs on the highway commission pay roll was forced to support the administration whether the jobs were for himself or another. Long would frequently appear on the floor of the house while that body was in session and tell the members how to vote.

But victory was too heady a brew for him. He estimated that he was now strong enough to settle scores with his old bugaboo, the Standard Oil Company, which has one of its largest refineries in Baton Rouge. During the first legislative session there had been an orgy of appropriations. These totaled more than a million dollars above the most optimistic estimates of possible revenues. Pressed for public funds, he called a special session of the legislature in the spring of 1929 and, as of old, gave the boys his orders. They were to levy a special occupational license tax on the business of oil refining. So confident was he that there would be no question about the legislature's doing his bidding that he even called the session for only six days, never doubting that he would muster a two-thirds majority in both houses to pass the entire matter under a suspension of all rules. There was a sickening surprise in store. Every manufacturing interest in the state rose in protest, and all their employees rose along with them, for they saw huge industries closing down and moving to other states.

Before the day was out, Long saw that he could not command a two-thirds majority, and extended the session call to eighteen days. Before the week ended he saw that he could not even muster a simple majority and gave orders to adjourn. It was on this vote to adjourn that a riot broke out in the House of Representatives, intensified by the charge that Long had sought to have a representative murdered by a hired assassin. There was a melée on the floor. The house refused to adjourn and within a fortnight the session impeached Long on eight counts.

Long wasted no time on the House of Representatives. That body was, for the moment, completely out of hand. So was the majority of the Senate. But he did obtain the signatures of fifteen members of the Senate—two more than were needed to block a two-thirds majority against him on impeachment—to a document unique in political annals. It was a round robin whose signers affixed their names to a public statement that they would not vote to convict Long on the impeachment charges, *regardless of the evidence,* because they considered that the charges were invalid, the impeachment having been voted after the expiration date of the special session.

There was nothing more to do. Enough Senators having signed this remarkable paper to make it impossible to obtain the required two-thirds majority against him, the court of impeachment promptly adjourned. However, this did not relieve the embarrassed state treasury. So, just before the next regular session of the legislature, Long made a stump tour of the state in favor of various public-improvement bond issues, which were to make everybody rich and happy. The legislature refused to pass them.

Long immediately announced himself as a candidate for the Senate, and pledged himself to remain Governor to the end of his term, even if elected, in order to keep Lieutenant Governor Paul Cyr from stepping in as Governor and ousting all the Long appointees. The issues of the campaign were the huge public-improvement bond amendments which had been blocked by the legislature.

Long won overwhelmingly, and the legislature promptly bowed in submission. At another special session, which was convened immediately after the election, the entire $135,000,000 improvement program was adopted and later ratified by the people at the polls—though how these drought-stricken Louisiana farmers brought themselves to vote for the expenditure of five and a half million dollars for the building of a new state house remains a mystery to this day.

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Huey Long is, to say the least, an unexplained phenomenon in American public life to date. The only thing that he has had in common hitherto with the standard-guage pattern of political bossdom—his ruthlessness—he says he has discarded.

"I'm getting older and learning something," he told me the other day. "I know you can't expect more'n 80-percent loyalty out of any man, and I'm not going to keep fighting those that are against me part of the time. If a man, from now on, will work with me on my big plans for this state and this nation for say an hour out of every day, he can fight me the other twenty-three hours for all I care. What I'm looking for is progress more than I am for people to tell me they're friends of mine."

But there will be high times in the United States Senate after May, 1932. It is true that Louisiana is naturally protectionist in her views, while uncompromisingly Democratic; but any national "White House Spokesman" who thinks Senator Huey Long is going to fall in line for the tariff without dictating a few conditions of his own first is due for a major surprise on all possible fronts.

HERMANN B. DEUTSCH.

Washington Notes

The Laval Tête-à-tête—Democrats and Debts—The Progressive Threat—Riling the Regulars—Wisconsin Rampant

SINCE M. Laval's visit, it seems to me, a change has come over the situation, and not a change that promises easy going for Mr. Hoover's plans of international economic coöperation. Administration spokesmen proclaim that he has no intention of asking Congress to reduce debts and reparations further. Nevertheless, as has been generally pointed out, all this means is that the initiative will come from Germany, and not from us. The question of further reduction is bound to be presented and the session will not be far under way when the time arrives.

If the Hoover-Laval conference means anything, it means that after the experts report upon Germany's condition, the administration and France will favor their recommendations. I do not suppose anyone doubts that the experts' recommendations will be for reduction or further suspension of reparations. It is the inevitable outcome of every investigation into Germany's condition. The trouble I speak of is coming from the Democratic side. In the past it has been more or less Democratic doctrine that debts and reparations were inseparably linked—a doctrine Mr. Hoover has now accepted—and that the effort to collect our debts was a futile one, productive largely of ill will and calculated to increase economic instability. That has been the opinion of most of the leading Democrats of the country, and of most of the leading Democratic newspapers. One of the Democrats most often mentioned for the presidency has been for some years an open cancellationist. Another, almost as highly regarded for the nomination, has been going about the country telling the people that neither debts nor reparations are any longer collectable and that the thing to do is to wipe them off the slate. It has been assumed that the majority of the Democrats would support in Congress an extension of the moratorium, if such is proposed, or a further scaling down of debts.

Now I am not so sure. One of the most influential party men, who has heretofore been in accord with this view, has switched around completely. What changed him I cannot say, but he was in this city a few days ago, conferring with Democratic Senators who more or less look up to him. To my surprise he had taken the view that the time had come to abandon this "tenderness" toward Germany. Reducing debts would get us nowhere. It merely meant further requests for loans, there was no end to that path, and eventually we would find the whole European load on our shoulders. In the end we would break our own back. In other words, he had, it seemed to me, adopted in toto the Hearst and Saturday Evening Post position. Further, he was having an effect upon those with whom he talked, not one of whom will "coöperate" with Hoover in foreign or domestic affairs except under compulsion.

Of course, it may be possible for Mr. Hoover to put his proposals up to Congress with enough weight behind them to make Democratic support compulsory. The point I want to make is that they will have to have a great deal of weight, because the reluctance to follow Hoover in these matters has been considerably increased within the past few days. A lot depends, I think, upon whether, after Congress meets, there is a feeling that business conditions are not quite so bad as they were, and whether the hysteria in financial circles has abated. If it has, then I believe that the public pressure to support Hoover will be very strong. If, however, there has been no abatement of fear in New York, my opinion is that a distrust of the whole business of foreign coöperation will be increased and the cry against "internationalism" from the Hearst press will be echoed by Democratic throats in Congress.

Leaving foreign affairs for domestic politics, it is interesting to note how the politicians received the announcement of the progressive members of the House from Wisconsin that they will not vote for the Republican-caucus choice for Speaker unless there is an agreement to liberalize the rules and to support certain relief measures. So far as the regulars in both the old parties are concerned, they don't like it. The astonishing part to me, however, is that they seemed surprised. What, for heaven's sake, did they expect? Did the regulars think that, with the last election giving the progressives a clear balance of power in the House, they would sit down like a lot of ninnies and not use it? What the Wisconsin move means is that the twenty-odd House progressives will act as a unit in legislative and organization matters. So far as the regular Republicans are concerned, it reduces their chances of electing their Speaker, in fact makes it impossible unless the demands of the progressives are conceded. Even if this is done by the leaders, it is not at all unlikely that there will be a recalcitrant Republican or so who will refuse to agree. Undoubtedly it makes Garner's election and Democratic control even more probable.

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When the situation in the Senate is considered, it seems clear to me that at least a part of the progressive program will go through Congress. It spells success, for example, for the Norris lame-duck amendment, and for various other measures which were ruthlessly killed in conference committees last session by the administration politicians. This time the situation will be different and the House conferees will not be amenable to administration pressure. The prospect is naturally displeasing to the regular Republican leaders—particularly distasteful to the friends of those two broad-minded statesmen—Mr. Snell and Mr. Tilson—who are aspirants for the speakership. On their side, considerable bitterness is expressed over the progressive "threat." They talk heatedly about the Wisconsin "hold-up" and are generally emotionally disturbed. The hold-up idea is just so much nonsense. How does anyone get anywhere in Congress without utilizing his power? Are the progressives to wait until they outnumber the regular Republicans before asserting themselves? Are they to be content with printing their program in the newspapers and introducing bills?

The progressives have the whip hand in both House and Senate in the next session. They would be complete dolts not to take every advantage of their strategic position to promote the legislative program they favor and the reforms in parliamentary procedure for which they have been clamoring. The Wisconsinites have served notice that the progressives will not only be unified, but aggressive. I don't blame the Old Guard leaders for not liking it, but I would blame the progressives if they acted otherwise.

The more I reflect upon the situation the more confirmed I am in the opinion I expressed here some weeks ago, to wit, that this next session will be mainly a duel between the progressive leaders and the President. There will be a succession of vetoes, but not all of them will be sustained. There will be turbulence and confusion, but some progressive legislation will get all the way through Congress this time—and some of it will be signed, too.

Washington. T. R. B.

Eugene O'Neill's New Play

Mourning Becomes Electra, a trilogy: Homecoming, The Hunted, The Haunted, by Eugene O'Neill. Guild Theatre, October 26, 1931.

TO HEAR the bare story, shortly told, of this new O'Neill play, with all its crimes and murders, may easily bring a flouting smile or recall Mrs. Malaprop's announcement of Sir Lucius' and Bob Acres' duel: "So, so, here's fine work, here's fine suicide, parricide, and simulation going on in the fields!" The same thing could be said of "Hamlet" or "King Lear" or "Oedipus King," of course, but this is sure to be the line the jibes will take from such of the play's critics as are unfriendly or impatient or incapable. As to the length of the event, the actual performance at the Guild could be considerably shortened by going faster in many places; the length of the play itself is for the most part organic with both its meaning and its effect. As to the depressing effects of the play, we will come to that later.

The title, as we see, intends to dispose at the start of the relation of "Mourning Becomes Electra" to the Greek drama. The story of the house of Atreus was set down by Homer, Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and diverse Greek writers whose works are not extant. From this house shadowed by an ancient curse, Agamemnon, brother of Menelaus, goes forth to the war at Troy. His wife Clytaemnestra, the sister of Helen, during her husband's absence takes for her paramour Aegisthos and shares the government of Argos with him. In due time Agamemnon, having at the god's behest sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia and bringing with him Cassandra, Priam's daughter, returns, and is murdered by Clytaemnestra and her lover. Electra, his daughter, is shamed and degraded and prays for the return of her brother Orestes, long ago sent out of the country by his mother and now become a man. Orestes returns, kills Clytaemnestra and Aegisthos. He is pursued by the Erinnyes, and only after wandering and agony and a vindication of himself before the tribunal of Athena's Areopagos is he cleansed of his sin.

"Mourning Becomes Electra" begins with the mother and daughter, Christine and Lavinia, waiting, there in this house of the Mannons, the return of Ezra Mannon from the war, which with Lee's surrender is almost over. A thread of romance is introduced between Hazel and Peter, a brother and sister, and the son, Orin, and Lavinia. Meanwhile Captain Brant comes to call; he pays a certain court to Lavinia, and she, acting on a cue from the hired man, who has been on the place these sixty years, traps him into admitting that he is the son of one of the Mannons who had seduced a Canadian maid-servant and been driven from home by his father, Lavinia's grandfather. She has all her data straight now. She has suspected her mother, followed her to New York, where Christine has pretended to go because of her own father's illness but has in fact been meeting Adam Brant. Lavinia has written her father and her brother, hinting at the town gossip about her mother. We learn that Captain Brant had returned to avenge his mother but instead had fallen passionately in love with Christine, who loves him as passionately as she hates her husband. From this point the play moves on, with the father's hatred of the son, who returns it, the son's adoration of his mother, the daughter's and the mother's antagonism, the daughter's and the father's devotion, to Christine's murder of her husband with the poison sent by Brant and substituted for the medicine prescribed against his heart trouble. Part One of the play ends here. Orin returns, after an illness from a wound in the head. Christine tries to protect herself in her son's mind against the plots of Lavinia. Lavinia, in the room where her father's body lies, convinces him with the facts; they trail Christine to Brant's ship, where she has gone to warn him against Orin. Orin shoots Brant. Christine next day kills herself. Brother and sister take a long voyage to China, stop at the southern isles, come home again. Substitutions have taken place, Lavinia has grown like her mother, Orin more like his father. Meanwhile his old affair with Hazel, encouraged at last by Lavinia, who now wants to marry Peter, is canceled; he finds himself making an incestuous proposal to Lavinia and is repulsed by her. He shoots

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himself. In the end Lavinia, speaking words of love to Peter, finds Adam's name on her lips. She breaks with Peter, orders the blinds of her house nailed shut, and goes into the house, to live there till her death. Justice has been done, the Mannon dead will be there and she will be there.

So bare an account serves the plot a little, but can give scant indication of the direct speeches and actions heavily charged with the burden and meaning of the scenes; nor does it convey the power and direct arrangement of some of them, that, for example, of the brother and sister at Brant's cabin, where the mere visual elements convey as much as the words. The chanty with which this scene opens, the song and the singer's drunkenness, the lonely ship in the dusk, establishing as it does the mood of longing, futility, land chains and the sea's invitation and memory, is a fine idea and greatly enriches the texture, though the performance did not fully establish the current or motive.

It will be obvious that the American dramatist, as the Greek did, used a well known outline which he could fill in to his purpose. Obviously, too, Ezra Mannon is Agamemnon, Captain Brant Aegisthos, Christine Clytaemnestra, Lavinia Electra, and Orin Orestes. But to dismiss the matter by saying that Mr. O'Neill has merely repeated the classic story in modern terms is off the track. Let it go at that and you will miss even the really classic elements in the play and get only the Greek side of it that is self-evident and that would be easy for any dramatist.

The story itself follows the Greek plays up to the middle of the third division of the play, and here the incest motive, the death of Orin and the transference of the whole situation and dramatic conclusion to the sister depart from Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. The blood motive in the lover, Adam Brant's relation to the family, is an addition. The resemblance motive, among Brant, Mannon and Orin, is new. The old hired man, the confidant, parallels to some extent a Greek device, familiar to us, however, in countless plays. The townspeople and workmen are now and again a kind of chorus. Many of the shadings and themes are from the older plays; for an example, the servant's line in Aeschylus,

I see the dead are killing one who lives

which underlies one of the new play's main themes. The death of the lover, as in Aeschylus and Euripides, not as in Sophocles, comes before that of the mother, which throws the stress where the O'Neill play needs it. The division of the play into three parts is of course like the trilogy of the Greek dramatists. On the other hand, the dividing line is much less distinct in "Mourning Becomes Electra"; the final curtain of the first part, for example, falls, it is true, on Mannon's death, as in Aeschylus it does on Agamemnon's, but there is not the same effect of totality because of the stress put on Lavinia; in "Agamemnon" Electra does not even appear.

The magnificent theme that there is something in the dead that we cannot placate falsely is in the Greek plays and in the O'Neill play. The end of the play is by imaginative insight Greek in spirit: Lavinia goes into the house, the blinds are closed forever, the stage is silent, the door shut, the exaltation is there, the completion, the tragic certainty. Finally, the peculiar kind of suspense employed in the play is Greek. The playwright has learned the adult suspense of the classics as compared with the adolescent sense of it, hit off happily enough at times, that reigns in the romantic drama of the North. Classic suspense does not depend on a mere crude strain, wondering how things will turn out, however entertaining and often dramatic that effect may be. The classic suspense has even a biological defense: you know that in life you will come to death, but just how the course of all your living will shade and fulfill itself you do not know, and you are borne up by an animal will to survive, a passionate participation, an absorbed contemplation of the course, till the last moment completes itself. In the classic form where the outcome is already known, lies the highest order of suspense. Knowing how things will end, you are left free to watch what qualities and what light will appear in their progression toward their due and necessary finish. You hang on what development, what procession exactly of logic, ecstasy or fate, will ensue with them, what threads of beautiful or dark will come into their human fabric.

It is interesting in our confused and feministic epoch that this new employment of the theme gives the play to Electra. Nowhere in Greek does this happen. From Sophocles there survives what must be only a section of a trilogy, the "Electra"; and though so much of the torment and waiting has been hers, Electra is at the end let off with a betrothal to Orestes' faithful Horatio, Pylades, and the forebodings and remorse rise in Orestes only, who has struck the death blow on his mother. In Euripides' "Electra" the conclusion is the forebodings of Orestes and the marriage of Electra to Pylades; in his "Orestes" Electra cleaves to her brother, who is in a violent neurotic sickness, quite modernly indicated; they are both in danger from the State for their action, and the whole situation is solved with a trivial and silly dénouement, gods from the machine, killings and abductions, wholly undramatic and redeemed, in so far as it is redeemed, only by Euripides' dialectic and poetic glamor. In Aeschylus, Electra appears only in the middle of the trilogy; the central hero is the royal line, Agamemnon and Orestes.

Along with these more accessible and manifest likes and dislikes, there are numerous points about Mr. O'Neill's play that are additions to or changes from the original Greek and that are yet both high creative invention and, in modern terms and material, recreations in the most profound sense of Greek equivalents. The most brilliant of these is the incest motive, coming toward the last of the play. (We must recall Shelley's remark that of all tragic motives incest is the most powerful, since it brings the passions most violently into play.) For Orestes the gray forms at the back, invisible at first to all but himself, are the Erinnyes, the Furies who will avenge the crime he has committed within his own blood. They are the daughters of night, and when they have been appeased, their other selves, the Eumenides, the Gentle Ones, will pass by and leave him peace. For Orin Mannon there comes the sudden form of his desire: incest: the realization and admission of what it has all been about all along, his feelings toward his father, toward his mother, toward Brant, toward Lavinia. This recognition of his obsession

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is his avenging Erinnyes. In this detail alone might rest the argument that Eugene O'Neill, placing a Greek theme in the middle of the last century, has written the most modern of all his plays.

The motive of the resemblance among the three men, Mannon, Orin and Brant, is a great dramatic image: it provides a parallel to the Greek motive of a cursed house, and at the same time remains modern and fresh. The Greek husband returned from the war with his paramour and after sacrificing his daughter; Mannon's return will bring the son also home again, to a more subtle and complex situation than the other. The Islands of the Blest, everywhere in Greek dreams, the southern islands that are the symbol of so much modern meaning in "Mourning Becomes Electra," make a fine motive. The mother in "Mourning Becomes Electra" is not killed by her son but takes her own life; his essential murder of his mother turns in his mind with a terror more modern but no less destroying; his mind storms with the Furies—"thoughts that accuse each other," as Cicero, writing in the sophistication of four centuries later, defined them.

It is not the Guild's fault if there is no overwhelming performance in "Mourning Becomes Electra." The casting of such a play is very difficult, and doubly so in the absence of any training in our theatre that would prepare actors for the requirements of such parts. The best performances came in the scenes between the mother and son, where Mme. Nazimova's sense of theatre and her fluid response combined with Mr. Earle Larimore's simple and right attack on his part, were truly convincing, and the scene between husband and wife, where Mr. Lee Baker gave a wholly right impersonation and the exact dramatic value for the play. Mr. Erskin Sanford turns out admirably in two character parts, the village doctor and the old workman who takes a bet on braving the ghost in the house. Miss Alice Brady had the role of all roles in the play most difficult. Her performance of this modern Electra was sincere, and was sustained at times not only by a sort of tour-de-force achievement, but with real physical power, voice and all. In a few scenes she was pathetic as well, clear and moving, and her beauty most impressive. No doubt there was some instruction from the author himself as to keeping the face like a mask, rigid and motionless, as if fate itself were living there in this passionate and resolute being. As for the Greek of that intention, we must recall that in the Attic theatre the mask for Electra was very likely one of tortured lines, that the Greek theatre changed masks if need be from one scene to another, and that the Greek actor in the part could avail himself of gesture, dance movement, and a thorough training in voice, meter, speech and singing. Realistically such rigidity never occurs except as a sign of disease. Esthetically it belongs only in the midst of a general stylistic whole, as in the Greek drama or the Chinese theatre that Mei Lan-fang brought to us. Technically it is immensely difficult, and derives not from an actual rigidity at all. Rigidity, masklike to the utmost, if you will, is a form of rhythm, as silence exists within a rhythm, when perceptible. It is unfair to bring so great an artist as Mei Lan-fang into the argument, but he gave us the whole model for such a problem in acting—the eyes constantly moving, the head imperceptibly in motion, supported by a complete and often almost invisible rhythm of the body, the emotions precise and compelling because of their very abstraction. Miss Brady's performance had several unforgettable moments. On the whole it moved gravely and in a manner remarkably well sustained just below the surface of the motives set for her by the dramatist; but her performance by failing both the darkness and the exaltation of the part often made only oppressive and unvaried what should have been burning and unconquerably alive and dominating. When we come right down to it, however, the best acting in the play is Mr. Earle Larimore's. In all his scenes up to the very last part, where he mouths too much and makes faces instead of a more intense concentration on his effects, he comes off first. In the scenes with his mother especially he surpassed everybody else in the company; he conveyed to us the dramatist's meanings completely, without implying that the character himself was conscious of them; and by a certain emotional humility before the moment in which he shared he came out securely right.

Out of Mr. Robert Edmond Jones' curtain and four settings, the rooms and the ship seem to me adequate without any haunting of the imagination, the front of the house dramatically right save for the lighting toward the rear, unnecessarily cruel to the actors. Mr. Philip Moeller's directing was admirable all through for its taste and evenness, its clear movement and fine placing of the scene. Its one fault was its tempo. There can be no doubt that Mr. O'Neill's play suffers greatly and will be accused of pretentiousness where it is wholly sincere and direct, in the first section especially, that in the afternoon, by the slowness with which the speeches are taken. Very often the effect is only that of a bourgeois respect for something to be taken as important. If it is the Greek spirit that is sought, the answer is that the Greek reading of lines was certainly formal but not necessarily slow; the chances are, in fact, that in the Greek theatre the cues were taken closely in order to keep the music going. And the Greeks had the advantage of music, dancing and a great declamatory style, the lack of which will have to be balanced by anything rather than this obvious spacing and pausing and trend toward monotone, a great deal of which anyway proceeds only from a theoretical stage New England.

The two gifts that Eugene O'Neill up to now has displayed are for feeling and for dramatic image. His plays have often conveyed a poignancy that is unique in the modern drama, you felt that whatever was put down was at the dramatist's own expense, he paid out of himself as he went. His great theatre gift has been in the creation of images that speak for themselves, such for instance as the tittering of the Great Khan's ladies-in-waiting at the western Marco Polo, the dynamo in the play by the same name, and many another, images so vivid that their mere repetition in people's talk makes the play sound better and more complete than it ever was. Sometimes this dramatic image spreads to the scope of a dramatic pattern that is the whole sum of the play. This happened not in more recent and elaborate plays, such as "Strange Interlude," but in at least two of the earlier, "The Emperor Jones"

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and "The Hairy Ape," where the whole plot was like an expanded sentence. In "Mourning Becomes Electra" Mr. O'Neill comes now into the full stretch of clear narrative design. He discovers that in expressive pattern lies the possibility of all that parallels life, a form on which fall infinite shadings and details, as the light with its inexhaustible nuances and elements appears on a wall. He has come to what is so rare in Northern art, an understanding of repetition and variation on the same design, as contrasted with matter that is less deep or subtle, though expressed with lively surprise, variety or novelty. It is a new and definite state in his development.

None of the old tagging appears in this play, no scientific terms that can be mistaken for psychological finalities. The feeling of Orin toward his father, for example, or of the daughter toward him, are not labeled. They are motives contrived to speak for themselves, and no specious explanation appears to be offered. The lapses in taste, as regards the writing itself, the trite jargon or the pushing of a situation to an obvious extreme, have vanished. The interest in shocking the bourgeois, not always lacking hitherto, has matured into the desire only to put in the truth. On the other hand the feeling remains. If not always as lyric as before, it has spread out into a more impersonal and distributed but no less passionate element in the play. The novelties and causes, masks, labor, sex and asides, devices, are not in evidence, or rather have moved inward whatever was in them beyond sheer theatrical effectiveness. Through most of its length the play moves steadily. The uncertainty in progression, comparative only, appears in the final scenes, a modern difficulty, for the matter turns inward, where the Greeks, in contrast, had the advantage of robust and sure outward symbols, tribunals, ceremonial, processions, and the forms of music and dance.

As to the depressing element of "Mourning Becomes Electra," I have only to say that it seems to me above anything else exhilarating. I trust I will not be thought pedantic when I say that what depresses me in the theatre is when the author dabbles in what is deep, enters where he has no right to be, and is glib about what he does not even taste the savor of. I need take no example, the stage is full of such. In "Mourning Becomes Electra" the end is fulfilled; Lavinia follows her direction, the completion of herself and her own inevitable satisfaction are seen. It may be that here life, as the Greek proverb said, wails as to a tomb. There may be other ways to manage, Rotarian healthy thoughts, exercise, good sense, saving the situation, leaving us more cheerful, marching on; but what of that? it is another situation that would be saved. There is a line of Leopardi's where he speaks of "my delight and my Erinnyes"; and once, thinking of the eternal silence, he hears the wind among the trees and goes comparing the infinite silence to that voice, and remembers the eternal, and the dead seasons, and the present and living, and the sound of it, *e il suon di lei.* In this immensity his thought drowns, and shipwreck is sweet to him in such a sea. When the play ended, and the last Mannon was gone into the house, the door shut, I felt in a full, lovely sense that the Erinnyes were appeased, and that the Eumenides, the Gentle Ones, passed over the stage.

STARK YOUNG.

CORRESPONDENCE

"The Jig of Forslin"

SIR: At the risk of appearing to look Pegasus in the mouth, may I point out a small inaccuracy in Mr. Allen Tate's otherwise admirable review of Houston Peterson's "The Melody of Chaos"? In his last paragraph Mr. Tate imputes to Mr. Peterson the opinion that "The Jig of Forslin" is a better poem than "The Waste Land." I think it will be found that Mr. Peterson nowhere states or implies any such opinion. Even of "The House of Dust" Mr. Peterson, after suggesting that it is a more successful poem than "Forslin," only says that it rivals *in certain "sections"* the best bits in "The Waste Land." And a careful comparison of this and other passages in Mr. Peterson's book makes it quite clear, I think, that the utmost Mr. Peterson claims for "The Jig of Forslin," in this regard, is the invention of a technique. I should be sorry to see this point misunderstood, for it involves an injustice both to Mr. Peterson and to Mr. Eliot, and an embarrassment to myself.

Rye, England. CONRAD AIKEN.

Beardsley to Smithers

SIR: I am editing a collection of nearly 200 letters written by Beardsley to his publisher, Leonard Smithers, between the years 1895 and 1898. As these are not a complete collection, I should be very glad to hear from owners of original letters written by Beardsley to Smithers. If they would send me the original letters, I would take the greatest care of them and, after copying, would return them by registered post.

R. A. WALKER.

60 St. Michael's Road, Bedford, England.

The Outflow of Gold

SIR: Although I am a regular reader of The New Republic and am generally in sympathy with the policies of the journal, I must call to your attention a glaring error in the editorial "Panic" in the issue of October 28.

It is in regard to the amount of short-term foreign credits outstanding in the United States. The figure is given as $272,000,000 as of October 17, on the authority of The Wall Street Journal. Only the uninitiate would accept this sum as representing "the visible demand deposits and acceptance holdings of foreign banks in this country," or, in other words, the foreign short-term credits held against the United States. What this sum really represents is the holdings of foreign central banks as reported to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. In addition to this, there is a large volume of credit of foreign individuals and commercial banks that is subject to withdrawal. The amount of this is about twice as large as the figure given above, and although no exact knowledge as to its true amount exists, the Federal Reserve Bank does collect from week to week the amount held by the larger banks here. For example, the total amount for the week for which you give the figure of $272,000,000 was estimated at almost $900,000,000. In view of the fact that our "free gold" was only about $962,000,000, and that the circulation of Federal Reserve notes has been increasing at an unprecedented rate, there is really more cause for alarm than you intimate.

I realize that your statements about the recent outflow of gold are in harmony with the propaganda of the New York banking fraternity that has been issued ever since this outflow of gold began. Nevertheless, in the interests of truth, there is no reason for The New Republic to join the chorus, at least not to the extent of deliberate misstatement.

EDWARD C. SIMMONS.

Columbus, Ohio.

[Our editorial made clear that the figure quoted did not represent the holdings of individuals, and that the United States could be driven off the gold standard if no protective measures were taken and panic prevailed. Nevertheless, our gold position is undoubtedly stronger than that of any other country.—THE EDITORS.]

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The Days of Brooklyn Bridge

The Brown Decades: 1865-1895, by Lewis Mumford. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 266 pages. $3.

LEWIS MUMFORD continues in "The Brown Decades" the great good work of synthetizing the recent past of American culture. Where many other contemporaries tend to be cosmopolitan and absorb as much as possible of the arts and inventions of modern Europe, he prefers to contemplate our own models, to appraise and revalue them. Is not the experience of the native artist or philosopher, within a setting nearly identical with our own, the most instructive one? Who can tell us better how to deal with adversity than Thoreau? And who is more fruitful in hints for the future of our plastic arts than a Frank Lloyd Wright? Moreover, the critic and historian, by pursuing the thread of the native orientation, rediscovers the continuity of culture, returns with the "sense of solidity that a continuous tradition, actively passed on from master to pupil or disciple, supplies."

It is Mr. Mumford's conviction that the period between 1865 and 1895 witnessed "a buried Renaissance." This is his point of departure. The metaphorical treatment of history has become increasingly fashionable since Spengler: a century may be termed "winter," a decade or a generation may be "mauve" in color. Mr. Mumford sets the age he studies—the one which Mark Twain long ago called "gilded"—in the key of brown. The color is obtained from the dirty-brown palettes of Eakins and Ryder, characteristic painters of the time, and seems appropriate. As for the season, it is "autumn." Between 1830 and 1860 there had been a quick efflorescence in literature: this was "spring." But the Civil War

> shook down the blossoms and blasted the promise of spring. . . . By the time the war was over browns had spread everywhere: mediocre drabs, dingy chocolate browns that merged into black. Autumn had come. . . . The leaves are sere, the goldenrod stands brown and threadbare in the fields.

The tardy industrial revolution seemed to set a term to the happy conditions under which literature had begun to flourish in the United States. The machine and factory economy possessed the country in a more violent form than in England; the cities were "Manchesterized"; the rivers took the color of iron and coal. Overnight the agrarian and frontier democracy had become a capitalist democracy. At this historic moment when the privateers of capital were plundering the national resources, when intellectuals were wrestling with their souls, and sensitive talents were expatriating themselves, the moral pulse of America beat most feebly, the thread of cultural continuity became so finely drawn that it was almost invisible. In the plastic arts, as in literature, the Americans of the time gave but a sorry account of themselves, save in one respect—architecture, the universal or key-art which embraces virtually all the others. The architects of the period were to have magnificent destinies; they were to face the cultural problem of the age directly, and answer it. To their story, Mr. Mumford, who is a remarkable interpreter of architecture, properly devotes the greater part of his book.

The central problem which was posed by the "brown decades" was that of the survival of art itself in a capitalist democracy. We know that the sense of plastic beauty had a veritable function for medieval Christianity, for the feudal society of the Renaissance, and even for the semi-feudal society of early, colonial America. But the industrial brigands of the "brown" or "gilded" age were fearless barbarians. They denuded the plains and the mountainsides of trees; they brought a "paleo-technic" disorder, they spread a pall of darkness and grime over the landscape. And as they laid out their railroads and gridiron cities, they couldn't for the life of them see why one should bother to have public gardens, squares, perspectives. "Up to this time," Mr. Mumford comments significantly, "with the exception of the New England commons and a few parades, there was nothing that could be called a park in America."

The whole crisis of the landscape—which, one readily agrees with Mr. Mumford, was profoundly symptomatic and important—is typified by the struggle for Central Park in New York. The idea of such a park had been first urged by William Cullen Bryant in 1851; and Frederick L. Olmsted had come later to plan and embellish it. But the politicians and land speculators did not want the park: it smacked of the aristocratic Old World, it was expensive, it consumed valuable building lots. For many years the struggle raged between Olmsted's little band and the sons of darkness. The landscape architect resigned five times; but in the end the idea of the public park as the center of city life triumphed and spread throughout the country.

The ugly temper of the "brown decades" in America is well exposed by the Central Park incident. Civilization had moved on; but nothing had come to take the place of the sense of faith which in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries created the Gothic cathedral; nor the passion for the humanities, the "sense of glory" which operated so powerfully in sixteenth-century personages such as Francis I, who invited Leonardo, Cellini and Titian to Paris. To be sure, universities were being busily founded, books and periodicals being printed, monuments of various kinds being erected, all in quantity and in a taste which has become memorable; but how was art to survive in the American environment? Good work—good craftsmanship which exhibited an understanding of material and technique, a love of difficulty, a thirst for perfection—this existed only in a precarious or marginal relationship to society and played no vital part in it.

Nevertheless, the age did rear for itself a superb cathedral, built of its new material, steel, and symbolizing its own grandiose industrial purpose. It was the Brooklyn Bridge, of which the good poets of later ages were to sing: not only one of the great engineering feats of the century, but certainly "the most completely satisfactory structure of any kind that had appeared in America." The Roeblings, father and son, who conceived and completed the huge suspension bridge, were both engineers and architects. They were strenuous and heroic men; and the success of the plan to which they devoted their lives, the great beauty of the bridge, provoked a revolution in the arts which is fully understood only a half-century later. What the Roeblings and their handiwork say to us in effect is that, if art is to survive under the new social scheme, it must survive as a function of that scheme rather than as a relic of feudal taste and glory.

The new art was to fulfill the laws of the new industry, the new engineering. Departing from the traditions of the French and Italian schools, its conception of the beautiful was to be the fitness of the parts of an organism, the naked expression of strength and usage. Functionalism, *Sachlichkeit*, were to characterize the arts which adapted themselves to the American order and the American scale of things. Here is the essential message of the architectural rebirth of

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the "brown decades," whose master-builders alone seemed to incorporate themselves within the changed society.

The gifted Richardson, as Mr. Mumford shows, at an important turning-point in his career abandoned his earlier romantic style and sought new architectural solutions for the constructions of the time, the railway terminals, department stores, office buildings, public libraries. Although he still worked in stone and masonry he came to realize beautifully the organic needs of the new structures; his later designs, in their arrangements of windows and modified supporting columns, in their suggestion of the "curtain" wall, in their striking departures from the dark, ponderous atrocities of the period toward lightness and openness to sun and air, pointed clearly to the forms of the steel-framed edifices of the future.

But the new structures were not to be the work of lyrical personalities so much as that of the industrialists who financed and the engineering which molded them. When John Root, in Chicago, planned the fifteen-story Monadnock Building, the engineer who controlled the affair and the capitalist who sponsored it both rejected his first ornate sketches, calling instead for a "straight up-and-down, uncompromising, unornamented façade," a "brick box," in short. The indignant Root yielded in the end; thus a great pile came into being, a severe masonry skyscraper which was truly a new thing under the sun. Rising land values, the elevator, the many hands that devised the structural steel skeleton, all combined to direct the architects, during the 1880's and 1890's, to the new adventure, almost in spite of themselves. The skyscrapers which soon loomed over our cities were the primitive expression of the style and the logic of American society.

In the primitive stages of a culture, the artists who are most directly in touch with their society simply reflect the new demands, the new potentialities. The skyscrapers—though Lewis Mumford will have none of them—were an inevitable part of the cycle. Their outlines expressed the "American note" vehemently and barbarously, almost in spite of the men who conceived them. Later, there come the articulate men who are thoroughly conscious of all the new instruments and media, and who play upon them as with the baton of the orchestra leader. Such a universal artist the Chicago school produced in Frank Lloyd Wright, to whom Mr. Mumford pays a great and by no means exaggerated tribute. It is Wright who, realizing the profound changes introduced by the machine and its products, gave expression to the cult of the machine, nearly thirty years ago. He had also the greatest consciousness of the new materials—steel, copper, glass, concrete—as well as brick, stone, wood. A mighty experimenter, thwarted by the very society whose meaning he expressed too boldly, too candidly, he was limited chiefly to the building of country houses; but the implications of his work reached to all departments of architecture. He suffered the fate of the greatest American artists, which was to see his work imitated abroad (by the European "cubists" and "constructivists" of the present time), and then reintroduced into his own country. His productions, more than those of any other American born after the Civil War, stirred the outside world.

We owe much to Lewis Mumford for having championed the great architects of the "brown decades" long ago, and for having sensed their vital connection with our own time. One might have wished, however, that his critique presented them less as insurgent or idealistic individuals, and more explicitly drew the inferences of their concerted program, their answer to the cultural dilemma. John Roebling, Richardson, Frank Lloyd Wright, all seem to address us directly through their works as if they foresaw our mechanized society and our new arts. These new arts of the so-called Machine Age still contain much that is flimsy and offensive. But in the hands of their best exponents they express the mechanical and technical society consciously. And whether in Soviet Russia or the United States, they flourish in measure with their adjustment to such a society, their functionalism.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON.

"I Would Be Heard"

My Fight for Birth Control, by Margaret Sanger. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 360 pages. $3.

IN A WORLD that is increasingly organized, in which more and more things are attempted "in the mass," there are few large-scale activities associated with individual vision and effort in the sense that birth control is associated with Margaret Sanger. The story of the birth-control movement in this country and, to some extent, in Europe and in the Orient, is her story too. Her crusade had its beginning in her own childhood as the sixth of eleven children in an upstate household where "the older children of the family had to go to work to help meet the rent, buy winter coal and pay grocery bills," and where the mother died at forty-eight, worn out with child-bearing and overwork. Before her marriage to the young architect William Sanger, Margaret Higgins took a nurse's training, followed by a postgraduate course in a New York hospital. It was after her return to her profession, following some years as a busy young suburban wife and mother, that she began her crusade.

Out of the misery of the women on New York's lower East Side, struggling with poverty, paying with broken health for too much child-bearing, sometimes with their lives for their attempts to limit the size of the family, seeing their babies born feeble or malformed because of their own depleted strength, came Margaret Sanger's decision: "I resolved that women should have knowledge of contraception. They have every right to know about their own bodies. . . . I would tell the world what was going on in the lives of these poor women. I would be heard."

She worked in American and European libraries, tracing the sociological and economic as well as the physical and ethical factors involved in giving widespread knowledge of contraception. She spent months studying safe and reliable methods of birth control. She had ranged against her the apathy of the leisure-class women who space their children and limit their families by scientific means, and are little concerned in having the information they take for granted made available to those who need it most. She encountered, too, the active opposition of various church organizations, notably the Roman Catholic, and of Anthony Comstock and his followers. She was confronted at every turn by federal and state statutes, which make it unlawful to give birth-control information or to supply contraceptive devices. And she had to help remake a public opinion which, twenty years ago, had not begun to think or to speak honestly and naturally about sex.

Mrs. Sanger's zeal for her cause has driven her frail body to almost unbelievable toil—writing, editing, publishing, studying, traveling, lecturing, organizing—never with money enough, always in the face of criticism and misunderstanding. Again and again she has had to fight for her principles and her personal liberty in the criminal courts.

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Police raids, usually traceable to political pressure by Roman Catholics, have repeatedly interfered with her work. And yet somehow the work has gone on. The story of the founding of the Brownsville Clinic and of the thousands of women who thronged it, telling their pitiful stories of physical exhaustion and economic despair, begging for "the secret" that would set them free, is one of the most moving chapters in the book.

There have often been times when Mrs. Sanger might have gained her ends more swiftly and more easily had she been willing to wait, to compromise, to be "tactful," to give up the direct, dramatic way of getting things done. But crusaders are temperamentally unable to lower the lance and sheathe the sword. And so we have this book, of bitterness and pain, of struggle and accomplishment. For those of little faith in human endeavor, and for those of deep belief, it is a heartening record. It tells how this woman with a message for our times, but without wealth or influence, or greater learning, or notable powers, has succeeded in making herself heard. BEULAH AMIDON.

Historical Fantasia

The Corn King and the Spring Queen, by Naomi Mitchison. With four pictures by Z. Stryjenska. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.75.

A HISTORICAL novel is presumably a novel in which imaginary, and sometimes real, characters, involved in the usual personal correlations and conflicts of fiction, pass against the background of a given epoch, with which they merge in the time spirit. From this it may be argued that all novels are historical novels; and so in a sense they are. Yet it is obvious that "War and Peace" is a historical novel in the sense that "Anna Karenina" is not, and this narrows the definition of values to more specific limits. It is now possible to say that the genre is predominantly concerned with the mood directly evoked by active events of so-called historical significance, and to this mood the characters are subordinated; incidentally, this concern is mostly with past epochs, because time alone can give the perspective so essential to the creation of the pattern called history. It is, then, the task of the historical novelist to recreate a given epoch, to reanimate it, to project it—as it were—into a living present.

The actual present having been eliminated, the question occurs: how far into the past may the novelist delve without violating the essential historic truth of his picture? For, as he goes farther and farther into the past, there must be surely a point where the pattern is lost and a different kind of pattern, that of myth, begins; he must enter, perforce, the realm of speculation, of fantasy, myth-making. Naomi Mitchison has been called "the best historical novelist now writing," a statement, in the light of her latest novel, to be accepted with reservations. Marob in Scythia, the chief scene of action, is, in her own words, "not historically real," though real places are introduced and the action definitely placed "between the years 228 B. C. and 187 B. C. . . . It is very doubtful," she admits, "whether, at a distance of more than two thousand years, one can ever get near to the minds, or even to the details of the actions of the people one is writing about, although they are in a way nearer to one than one's living friends."

It would be more accurate to call this interesting work a historical fantasia; in some such way does a musical composer subdue and enslave his theme to the personal equation. This is not censure, but a tribute. The story begins very simply, like a children's tale created from a myth; but before long fabulous Marob becomes a kingdom which only sophisticates may enter. It is because, at first, Marob is ruled by the Corn King and the Spring Queen, forces of folk magic which make the corn grow; but later a shipwrecked Stoic philosopher comes on the scene and the Corn King begins to ask himself uncomfortable questions. He goes to Sparta, where King Kleomenes introduces the New Times—a communistic state of sorts. Then another philosopher, this time an atheist, appears on the scene; he is ultimately converted to Marob's ways by witnessing the works accomplished by native "magic," which, though irrational, is better than all doubts.

Complicated psychology—for Miss Mitchison knows how men's and women's hearts react—and modern thought go to the making of this vast allegory. If it were not for Frazer of "The Golden Bough," for Spengler, Freud, the Russian Revolution, this book would not have been written; at least, not in the same way. The author reveals immense erudition; nor is she chary of authentic historical detail, where available. Yet she cannot be charged with didacticism; all the vast material is transmuted into legitimate fiction. To encourage the illusion of reality, she permits herself the use of a modern jargon. "She'll be all dolled up, you won't know her," is not the sort of thing one would expect, but it comes off. The book is by far too long. Without doubt, it was conceived and executed in infinite patience; and only the patient reader, willing to be gradually immersed in its atmosphere, can glean all its treasure. JOHN COURNOS.

"More Light," Said Goethe

The Doctor Looks at Life and Death, by Joseph Collins. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 315 pages. $3.

DR. COLLINS' final book of a series of seven reveals that "Countless teachers have sought to tell us how to play the game of life. Despite their efforts, most of us play it poorly. Many are duffers." Which doubtless is true.

Of Youth and Age: "When we are young, we dread to die; when we are old, we dread to suffer." Which is neat.

Of the Passions: "Anger has a physiological basis and a social justification . . . a society in which everyone were meek and placid would be unprogressive, stagnant and probably corrupt." Which is a terrible thing to think about.

Of Ambition: "The ambition to become a great actor or artist, a great statesman or scientist is laudable if it is conceived properly and carried out respectfully. But if the road to its realization is strewn with wounded, maimed and killed, it is a vice, not a virtue." Which strikes a slap for Decorum.

Of People: "What is to be done if there are more mouths than can be fed and no wars to close them?" Which is a trifle previous.

Of the Chief Executive: "Temperamentally, our President must be classed with the silent, good-tempered man . . . he has also something of the artistic temperament." Which is cheering.

Of Death: "Death is the natural event which occurs when life has fulfilled its ordained period." Which ends the book.

Add Pearls of Rhetoric, one: "There had to be some

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money to put them [three orphans] in an institution. . . . No one knew for a long time how it happened, but they were promptly placed into such an one." Which goes to show that where there's an will, there's an way.

MURRAY GODWIN.

Book Notes

BIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIRS

COMPANIONS ON THE TRAIL, by Hamlin Garland. *New York: The Macmillan Company. 539 pages. $2.50.*

In "Roadside Meetings" Mr. Garland told the story of his migration from a homestead farm in Dakota to Boston, in search of the higher life. It is a sort of "Pilgrim's Progress" with culture as its objective instead of salvation; and it reveals human resources of courage, perseverance and fortitude of which Christian might have been proud. In "Companions on the Trail" the goal has been reached, but one is moved to wonder whether Mr. Garland has not mistaken Vanity Fair for the Celestial City. In the years between 1900 and 1914, Mr. Garland was the leading representative of the Middle West in the arts, its liaison officer in communicating with New York and Washington and its greeter of notables when they came to Chicago. He covered the entire country in his journeys, and with as good a right as Satan he might have boasted, "Not to know me argues yourself unknown." His genius is social rather than esthetic. In his early years he was a fighter for human justice under the banner of Henry George. We hear little of this crusade in the present volume. His social energy was expanded in interviews, receptions and dinners. His organizing faculty was directed to his own group, which he regimented into the American Academy, the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and the Cliff Dwellers of Chicago. The record of all this, with Mr. Garland's comment on the people he met and the works of art he inspected, constitutes a useful if saddening chapter of American history. This is what American culture meant to a man who had dared and endured much to achieve it. One cannot doubt the truth of the record. The testimony is undesigned; indeed, it is prejudiced in favor of the defense, for Mr. Garland's genuine kindness and eagerness to help everyone naturally dispose him to optimism. It is corroborated by observers over whose aloofness and lack of gregarious geniality Mr. Garland shakes his head—Henry B. Fuller and William Vaughn Moody, Robert Herrick and Edward A. MacDowell. Unconsciously Mr. Garland supplies background against which the meretricious quality of American culture reveals itself. In contrast with his acquired taste for cities and society, there remains the inheritance of Mr. Garland's youth, his enthusiasm for nature and the life closest to nature. In his chapters of backtrailing to the frontier we find the best of America and the best of Mr. Garland.

WOMEN FOR SALE, by Chile Acuna. *New York: William Godwin, Inc. 201 pages. $2.*

Like Herbert Clark Hoover, Mr. Acuna, as self-revealed in this book, is convinced that we live in a state of rugged individualism. "Truly," he reflects, after relating how the carefully synchronized coöperation of the armed and authorized forces of the State and himself—as stool pigeon—had intimidated two young women into surrendering their savings, "the motto of this world in which I find myself is 'Each for himself and the devil take the hindmost.'" Not a few other happenings in "Women for Sale" remind one of the practical working out of that prideful self-reliance gloried in by the nation's chief. Mr. Acuna, scion of an aristocratic Chilean family, has been of an independent nature ever since boyhood. Defying his family, he came to the United States some years ago, spent his inheritance, became a waiter, worked three years in Washington, and returned to New York to take employment as under-cover man for the municipal police, particularly the vice squad. After falling out with the police he was railroaded to jail and, on his release, found it politic and profitable to inform the Seabury inquiry regarding the system of testimony which released from jail some of his victims, in being featured as front-page news in the best papers and in remaining alive and available when other witnesses were notably absent. His book paints him as a man of few faults—ambitious, industrious and an indulgent husband and parent.

PSYCHOLOGY

PSYCHOLOGY: SCIENCE OR SUPERSTITION? by Grace Adams. *New York: Covici-Friede. 299 pages. $2.50.*

Here, without doubt, is one of the most readable and well grounded histories of modern psychology published in recent years. Grace Adams (Mrs. Edward Hutter), who received her psychological training under the stern eye of E. B. Titchener, succeeded in breaking away from his dominating influence to take up psychiatric work with "problem children" in New York City. In this, her first book, she tells the story of the phenomenal rise of psychology from the time of Wilhelm Wundt and William James to behaviorism, *Gestalt* and beyond. Throughout, the important role played by the United States in psychological development is emphasized: the accounts of James; Stanley Hall, who made Freud safe for America; Titchener, official psychologist of France and guiding star of the experimental school of Moscow; Cattell, inventor of "mental tests"; Münsterberg, "Psychotechnician"; Watson, Thorndike and many others, are packed full of information, frame-ups and blackmail which had grown up under the friendly protection of the state prostitution law. He succeeded in giving presented with unusual literary skill and a sly but never malicious wit. The conflicting doctrines of psychoanalysis, behaviorism, structuralism, functionalism, *Gestalt*, "anthropometry" and other attacks upon the evasive psyche are set before the reader with a genial impartiality that quite justifies the title of the final chapter, "But Is It Science?" An excellent bibliography and a short resume of the schools terminates a volume whose happy blend of scholarship, style and critical insight establishes Grace Adams as a writer well worth attention.

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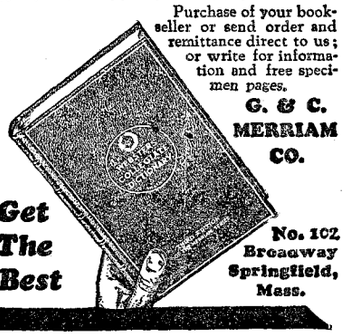

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FICTION

THE DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN, by Henry Williamson. *New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.50.*

Mr. Williamson has entirely rewritten his first novel, published in 1924, reflecting a changed point of view toward his characters and their situations. What change has taken place is not made clear: the story itself is concerned with the activities of Maddison, a Romantic in the tradition of Shelley; and the activities include a love affair and work on a prophetic book. Shelleyan Romanticism does not seem a very pertinent message at the present time, and although Maddison is spoken of as a "Hamlet, haunted by the ghost of ten million murdered men of his generation," one feels that the War is a justification, rather than a cause, and that Maddison as a type would be much as he is in any condition of society.

GUESTS OF THE NATION, by Frank O'Connor. *New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.*

The guerilla warfare and espionage in Ireland during the late rebellion are the background for this volume of excellent short stories by a new writer, Frank O'Connor. In terse and objective narrative the author has presented a series of connected incidents and scenes which are often powerfully dramatic. Occasionally the action begins without explanation and necessitates a second reading, but on the whole O'Connor writes with admirable clarity and his dialogue is invariably convincing.

THE LOVE OF MARIO FERRARO, by Johan Wigmore Fabricius. *New York: Simon and Schuster. $3.*

This Dutch novel with an Italian hero has been translated into English from an earlier German translation; it survives the double process as a rapidly moving story. Wild, childlike Mario, a fisherman of Capri, stabs a tourist and escapes to Naples, whence he goes as a stowaway to South America. On the sweating border of Paraguay he lives as a cattle-rancher; sends for his Caprese sweetheart, and dies in the midst of revolution and circumstances shameful in the extreme. The characters move passionately, almost helplessly, against a voluptuous background which, as in Conrad's stories, assumes the leading role.

RED-HEADED WOMAN, by Katharine Brush. *New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.*

"Red-Headed Woman" is altogether a better piece of writing than anything the author has done before. It is the story of Lil Andrews, siren daughter of the crossing watchman, whose social ambitions are coupled with the ageless knowledge of how to satisfy them. Lil marries the son of the town's richest man, only to be ignored and ridiculed by his friends. The characters, the town and the situations are drawn with shrewdness and accuracy, but one doubts that the parvenu aristocracy of another Middletown is as impenetrable to a beautiful climber as Miss Brush would like us to believe.

Contributors

H. N. BRAILSFORD, the English journalist, contributes extensively to The New Leader, of London, and to various other magazines in this country and England.

HERMANN B. DEUTSCH, a New Orleans newspaper man, is the author of "The Incredible Yankee," a biography of Lee Christmas which was published last spring by Longmans, Green.

BEULAH AMIDON is associate editor of The Survey Graphic and a specialist in the field of industry and education.

JOHN COURNOS, author of "The Mask," "Babel," "The New Candide" and other books, has just completed "There Was a Man . . . ," a two-volume novel to be published early next year by Farrar and Rinehart.

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